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The Nation.

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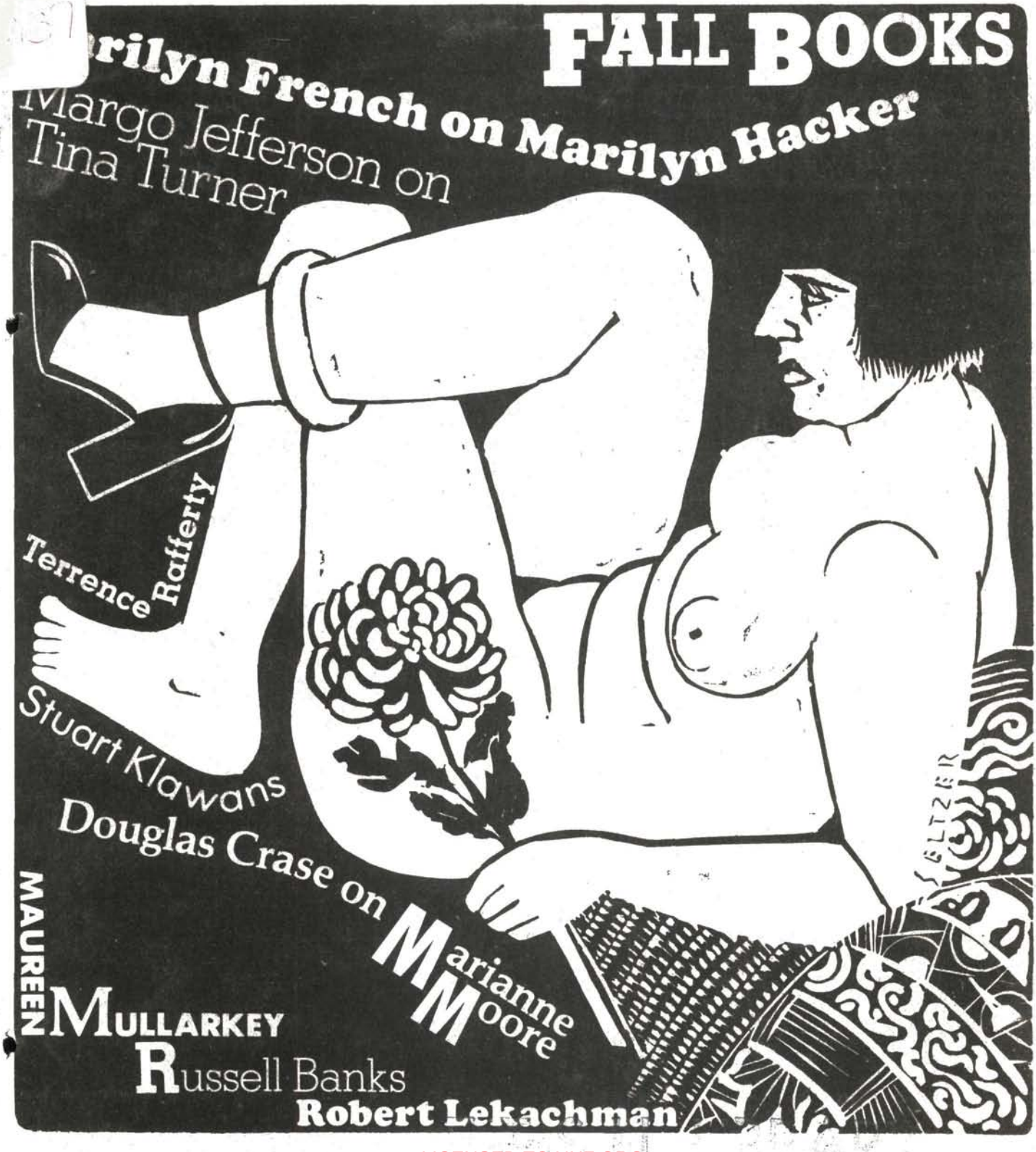

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LETTERS.

STOP GRAZING

San Francisco

Wilbur Wood's otherwise useful article on the Yellowstone National Park grizzly bear situation requires clarification on the issue of livestock grazing on public lands ["What Is Wild and What Is Natural?" Aug. 16/23].

Contrary to the idea of a "wilderness, where no livestock grazing is permitted," the vast majority of national forest wildernesses are grazed. The Wilderness Act of 1964 specifically allows grazing to continue at historic levels in designated wildernesses. The Bureau of Land Management even has plans to introduce grazing in parts of Idaho Wilderness Study Areas that previously have not been grazed. If they can accomplish that before an area is designated as wilderness, cattle will presumably be allowed to graze legally and indefinitely.

Also, contrary to the article, ranchers do not typically lease national forest land. They simply hold grazing permits allowing them to place livestock in a particular area. Ranchers may act as though they have full property rights but, in fact, the land still belongs to all of us.

Considering its minimal economic benefits and the major environmental damage it causes, private livestock grazing on public land in the West should be re-evaluated and greatly restricted or eliminated altogether.

David R. Parks
San Francisco Earth First!

WOOD REPLIES

Roundup, Mont.

David Parks's statement that "the vast majority of national forest wildernesses are grazed" does not mean that most of our wilderness land is being eaten down by cattle. What it means is that, within a majority of those wilderness areas, there is some livestock grazing, generally in quite limited areas. This occurs, as Parks correctly points out, where ranchers had grazed livestock prior to wilderness designation.

Parks is also correct to note that grazing rights in national forests generally are called "permits." Grazing rights on those vast tracts administered by the Bureau of Land Management (B.L.M.) usually are called "leases." On other public lands—such as the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge in Montana (where ninety-four ranchers graze animals)—the term is "allotments." The technical differences among those terms are small: in all cases a rancher pays a fee per animal grazed, and in no case I know of does a grazing permit, lease or allotment curtail a citizen's right to visit those lands.

I share Parks's dismay at deteriorating lands—be they wilderness, national forest, wildlife refuge or B.L.M. acreage. I do not, however, share his view that removing livestock, or greatly reducing their number, will reverse that deterioration.

Overgrazing is bad but it is not the sole cause making deserts of semiarid grasslands, public or private, in the Western United States or elsewhere on the planet. Nor is removing livestock the cure. The answer lies in concentrating herds of grazing animals and directing their flow on the land to mimic the natural flow of the wild grazers that roamed there prior to livestock.

Wilbur Wood

NO FRIEND OF MINE

Leavenworth, Kan.

I usually read *The Nation* with some degree of interest; however, the August 30 issue infuriated me. I refer specifically to Eric Scigliano's article, "America's Down-Home Racists," in which he says of "Pastor" Robert E. Miles:

> Privately, Miles tells of how *he became good friends* with American Indian activist Leonard Peltier, Puerto Rican separatist Rafael Miranda and members of the Black Liberation Army and Moorish Temple when they were all together at Marion. (Emphasis added.)

Let me state unequivocally that I have never considered myself to be even a distant friend of Miles. My association with the man was nothing more than an enforced situation (we were in Federal prison in Marion, Illinois, together) and not a situation of my choosing. I absolutely refuse any equation of us that might be made, and though some conversation may have passed between us, there was never the slightest hint of a rapport. I resent any suggestion to the contrary. To the best of my knowledge, Miles is a racist and a fascist, and he can look to me for absolutely no support.

Leonard Peltier

AUTHOR'S PROTEST

Montpelier, Vt.

I would like *The Nation*'s readers to know that the article I wrote for the September 27 issue was inappropriately, though not coincidentally, given the title: "Arab Deterrents: Going 'MAD' in the Middle East," which distorts the central thrust of the piece. Arab governments, as the article shows, have sound reasons in 1986 to seek weapons of mass destruction in a situation in which Israel has obtained, and is regularly using, its own. It is not madness therefore, as the article's title implies, for the Arabs to seek countervailing weapons in an effort to make Israel think before it bombs.

I was not consulted as to the title of the article, and I would never have permitted such a misrepresentation and distortion of the text. Nor was I aware, until the magazine appeared, that the article would run with a drawing that is a crude racial stereotype of "MAD" Arabs.

Moreover, those curious exercises of editorial prerogative followed several efforts by the magazine's editorial staff to "soften" the piece. For example, the figures for civilian deaths resulting from Israeli military action (see page 281 of the article) had disappeared from the text when galleys were printed. And at an earlier stage in the editorial process, it had been suggested that I drop the "Pax Hebraica" section from the article altogether.

Against my better judgment I did acquiesce in certain of the recommended changes. Nor did I object when I learned that *The Nation*'s fact checker was checking with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Facts, after all, are facts: they are not Stephen Green's facts or AIPAC's facts.

But I do now protest, and draw readers' attention to what I consider to be an effort to gut the article by giving it that bizarre title. This was unfair to me and it was intellectually dishonest. It was also chickenshit journalism.

Stephen Green

We regret that Stephen Green was unhappy with the title and illustration for his article. The former, of course, was intended as a pun on "mutual assured destruction," a phrase Green used in his piece; and the latter, by definition, dealt in caricature.

In editing his piece—which he submitted at twice the normal 2000-word length—our effort was to help him focus and sharpen rather than "soften" it. We did not ask Green to drop the "Pax Hebraica" section; we simply suggested that he make some changes in that section and move it to the end of his piece, where it appeared. We are sorry Green did not express his reservations at the time.

The Nation's fact checker called AIPAC to verify Green's description of U.S. arms transfers to Arab countries, a subject AIPAC monitors closely. Our fact checkers always try to consult a wide range of sources, particularly when facts are in controversy. We hope Green agrees that the minor errors caught in the process were worth catching.

We are pleased to have published Green's article, which we think speaks for itself.

—The Editors

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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EDITORIALS.

Truth and Libel

Much has been written on the relationship between truth and libel, but little on truth *about* libel. As we publish our Fall Books issue, three of an alarming number of recent developments require comment.

Retired General William Westmoreland actually lost (but technically settled) his $120 million libel suit against CBS—he got no money and no apology, only the sort of lame affirmation of his integrity CBS would presumably have been happy to subscribe in the first place—but is now on the college circuit receiving inflated lecture fees, telling students about his "victory." Westmoreland's case was conceived and funded by a network of right-wing groups out to undermine what they regard as a liberal media conspiracy.

Then there is the libel suit brought by an obscure F.B.I. agent, David Price, against Peter Matthiessen, author and sometime *Nation* contributor, and his publisher, Viking Penguin, in connection with Matthiessen's book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, which deals with the American Indian Movement and government attempts to discredit it. One of the counts in the long indictment accuses Matthiessen (correctly, as it happens) of calling Price "a model FBI agent"—Matthiessen's point being, as one of his lawyers, Martin Garbus, puts it, "what [Price] did right is precisely what is wrong with the F.B.I. . . . for whom truthfulness and integrity have been reduced to an aspect of public relations." Matthiessen and his attorneys claim that the documents Price has

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been getting in the case's discovery proceedings have been turned over to the F.B.I., so that the Bureau is in effect using the agent's personal case for its own political purposes.

In the third episode, Joe McGinniss, a prolific and experienced journalist and author, thought he had solved any potential libel problems related to his book *Fatal Vision*, the story of a U.S. Army doctor convicted in 1979 of murdering his wife and children. McGinniss says that he had secured a release from the doctor promising not to sue. More important, he was assured by his publisher that its insurance company would indemnify him should his writing prompt a libel suit. But after McGinniss concluded that the doctor was indeed guilty, and after the book became a best seller and a television movie, the doctor sued—and instead of alleging libel, he alleged fraud. The insurance company declined to indemnify because fraud was not covered by its policy, so McGinniss is now suing his publisher's insurer. He charges, in effect, that *he* has been defrauded—since the doctor's suit charges him with invasion of privacy and libel under another name. If plaintiffs can prevent indemnification by suing for libel under another guise, then the protection insurance provides is drastically diminished.

Two of these cases involve public figures; the third could have far-reaching effects on public discourse. We are reminded once again of the uncommon sense of Justice Hugo Black's opinion in *New York Times v. Sullivan* in 1964:

> I doubt that a country can live in freedom where its people can be made to suffer physically or financially for criticizing their government, its actions or its officials.

'Patricia Daniloff'

Like most black-tie affairs, Columbia University's annual Maria Moors Cabot awards ceremony for press coverage of inter-American affairs is rarely an occasion for high drama. Sometimes the awards themselves are controversial, as they were last year, when the committee decided to honor *New York Times* ideologue-in-residence Shirley Christian. This year, however, the ceremony was dominated by the absence of a specially invited guest, Colombian journalist Patricia Lara, who is a 1980 graduate of Columbia's School of Journalism. According to the Administration's interpretation of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, Lara, who writes for Bogotá's leading daily, *El Tiempo*, is a threat to national security.

When Lara's plane landed in New York early Monday, October 13, she probably anticipated nothing worse than Kennedy airport's slow-moving lines. She was in possession of a valid U.S. visitors' visa, issued in Paris last year, and had been in this country as recently as April. But Immigration and Naturalization Service officials found Lara listed in their 40,000-name "lookout book" and told her she would be detained at the airport overnight.

From that point on, things turned nightmarish for Lara. The next day, she was taken under guard to an I.N.S. holding facility in Manhattan. From there, she filed two stories by telephone to her editors at *El Tiempo*. On Wednesday, she gave an impromptu press conference. This apparently was too much for the I.N.S., which moved her to the Metropolitan Correctional Center, a maximum-security Federal prison, where she was held in "segregation" in a locked cell. The same day, the State Department revoked Lara's visa, saying it had been issued "in error." On Thursday, the I.N.S. Regional Commissioner in Burlington, Vermont, ruled that Lara should be deported; by Friday morning, she was on a plane back to Bogotá.

Lara faced exclusion from the United States under two provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act. One prohibits entry to anyone likely to engage in "activities which would be prejudicial to the public interest or endanger the welfare, safety, or security of the United States." The other refers to "espionage, sabotage, public disorder, or . . . other activity subversive to the national security" and the "overthrow of, the Government of the United States by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means." What is unusual about the Lara incident is that a journalist—not to mention one with a valid visa—was barred under these provisions. Worst of all, Lara was ruled excludable without a hearing; in effect, expelled without knowing the charges and with no chance to defend herself.

What did the State Department think it had on Patricia Lara? In 1982 she wrote a best-selling book based on interviews with three leaders (all now dead) of Colombia's M-19 guerrilla movement. After that, she spent several months in Cuba as a radio correspondent. The seventh edition of her book carries a preface by Colombia's Conservative former president, Belisario Betancur. As a journalist with extensive sources, she may have helped visiting U.S. colleagues make contacts in the Colombian left. Her own writings were highly critical of U.S. policy in Central America. But if that alone were grounds for exclusion, the I.N.S. lookout book would run to many volumes.

Lara's counsel, Arthur Helton of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, plans to challenge the revocation of her visa and use the Freedom of Information Act to discover the basis of the State Department and I.N.S. actions. As Helton notes, though Lara's experience is extreme, she is not the only person held by the I.N.S. for no apparent reason. Another recent Helton client was Choichiro Yatani, a Japanese graduate student who was detained on his return to New York City in July from a conference in Amsterdam, where he had delivered a paper on nuclear disarmament. The I.N.S. held Yatani for forty-four days before allowing him to rejoin his wife and children—who are U.S. citizens. It never disclosed the reasons for its attempt to exclude him.

On October 19, the normally conservative *El Tiempo* ran an editorial on the Lara episode headlined "Patricia Daniloff," excoriating the "enormous political stupidity" of the State Department and lamenting the "inexplicable relics of McCarthyism." For now, the Lara case is a cause célèbre in Latin America; it may yet become one here. Already, New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan has suggested that he may sponsor legislation to supersede the McCarran-Walter Act. If his colleagues can rise above

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their reluctance to confront the Administration, we may yet see some long-overdue change in this most archaic and vindictive of laws.

No Pasaran

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, hurriedly passed by Congress on October 17, is not, as some of its friends have proclaimed, the dawning of a new day for people who want to enter the United States. In fact, it will do more harm than good to Hispanics, and it will have very little effect on the problems it is intended to solve.

The act imposes penalties on employers who knowingly hire those who have not been authorized to work here. (Employers do not have to check on people already at work.) In addition, it will admit 350,000 agricultural workers—more if necessary—from Mexico each year. Aliens already in the United States who have worked in the fields for at least ninety days of the year prior to May 1986 can eventually become citizens. So can undocumented immigrants who can prove they arrived in this country prior to January 1, 1982.

The framers of the reform would have us believe that so-called illegal immigration is a national problem, but it is not. The immigration problem centers on the Southwest; the number of unauthorized migrants turned away from the other U.S. entry points has always been small. But attempts to control immigration from Mexico have a long history. In 1964, when Mexicans were permitted to enter this country as agricultural laborers under the *bracero* program, the Immigration and Naturalization Service picked up only 45,000 undocumented Mexicans along the Southwest border. After the program was terminated the next year, the number quickly soared. By 1971, I.N.S. apprehensions near the Mexican border were in the hundreds of thousands. Facing a recession and rising unemployment, the Nixon Administration proposed, in H.R. 2328 that year, to punish jobholders who were not authorized to work in the United States as well as their employers.

But the bill was defeated, as was every bill that appeared before Congress in the succeeding years that would have imposed sanctions on workers crossing the Southwest border. More recently, sentiment has emerged for a compromise—sanctions on workers, but with an extremely limited amnesty. However, protracted legislative wrangling made it impossible to pass a sanctions bill until many of its opponents agreed to accept one with various liberal modifications.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act is an attempt to regulate an enormous geopolitical phenomenon. Closing off one of Mexico's economic safety valves, when that country is rapidly heading for recession, is bound to cause trouble. The I.N.S. expects to stop 1.8 million would-be immigrants this year, 95 percent of them at the Mexican border. *The New York Times* for October 19, which contained an editorial in support of the new law, carried the front-page headline, "Hard Times in Mexico Cause Concern in U.S." Indeed, the act provides that within ninety days after the law is enacted, the President must consult with his Mexican counterpart regarding "its possible effect on the United States or Mexico."

It seems highly unlikely that the new law will do much to stop the flow of undocumented workers over a 1,960-mile border, into an area of the United States that was once part of Mexico. Closing the border altogether would require a military presence that would be both politically unacceptable and impossibly expensive.

In addition, it seems unlikely that the law will preserve jobs for U.S. workers, as some of its sponsors claim it will. Surveys of factories raided by the I.N.S. in Los Angeles and other major cities in 1982 showed that although native-born Americans lined up to take the jobs that became available after "illegals" had been rounded up, they did not keep them. According to the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, reporters who returned to the factories several months later found that the U.S. workers had quit, refusing to accept low wages, poor conditions and degrading work. The factory owners replaced them with a new round of undocumented workers. MALDEF says that most owners of the marginal businesses that employ and exploit immigrants will probably close or move across the border into Mexico rather than screen workers. In neither case will they provide work for jobless Americans.

But the law is likely to have at least one effect. The U.S. Civil Rights Commission commented in 1975 that a similar bill proposed at that time would have "a direct discriminatory effect on minority persons seeking employment." Frequent raids by the I.N.S. on communities of Latin Americans have already subjected Hispanic workers to discrimination. The new act, requiring employers to inspect prospective workers' proof of their right to employment, may discourage many from hiring Hispanics altogether.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act will benefit some undocumented immigrants, although that number is far smaller—possibly fewer than a million—than is commonly believed. Many people who have been working "off the books" and avoiding social-service agencies because of their fear of the I.N.S. will now find it difficult to prove their years of residence.

However, additional discrimination against Hispanics as a result of the law will go on and on, as will the law's tendency to pit the foreign-born against the native-born and to scapegoat immigrants for economic problems. Hispanics are currently playing a role in the American social imagination that was filled in turn by the Irish, Italians, Chinese and Slavs.

Creating jobs for the Americans who need them is a much harder task than imposing sanctions on employers who hire undocumented immigrants, and it is one Congress has refused to face. We must look to the day when the native-born and foreign-born join together to secure their economic and political rights.

IRA GOLLOBIN

Ira Gollobin has been practicing immigration law for fifty years.

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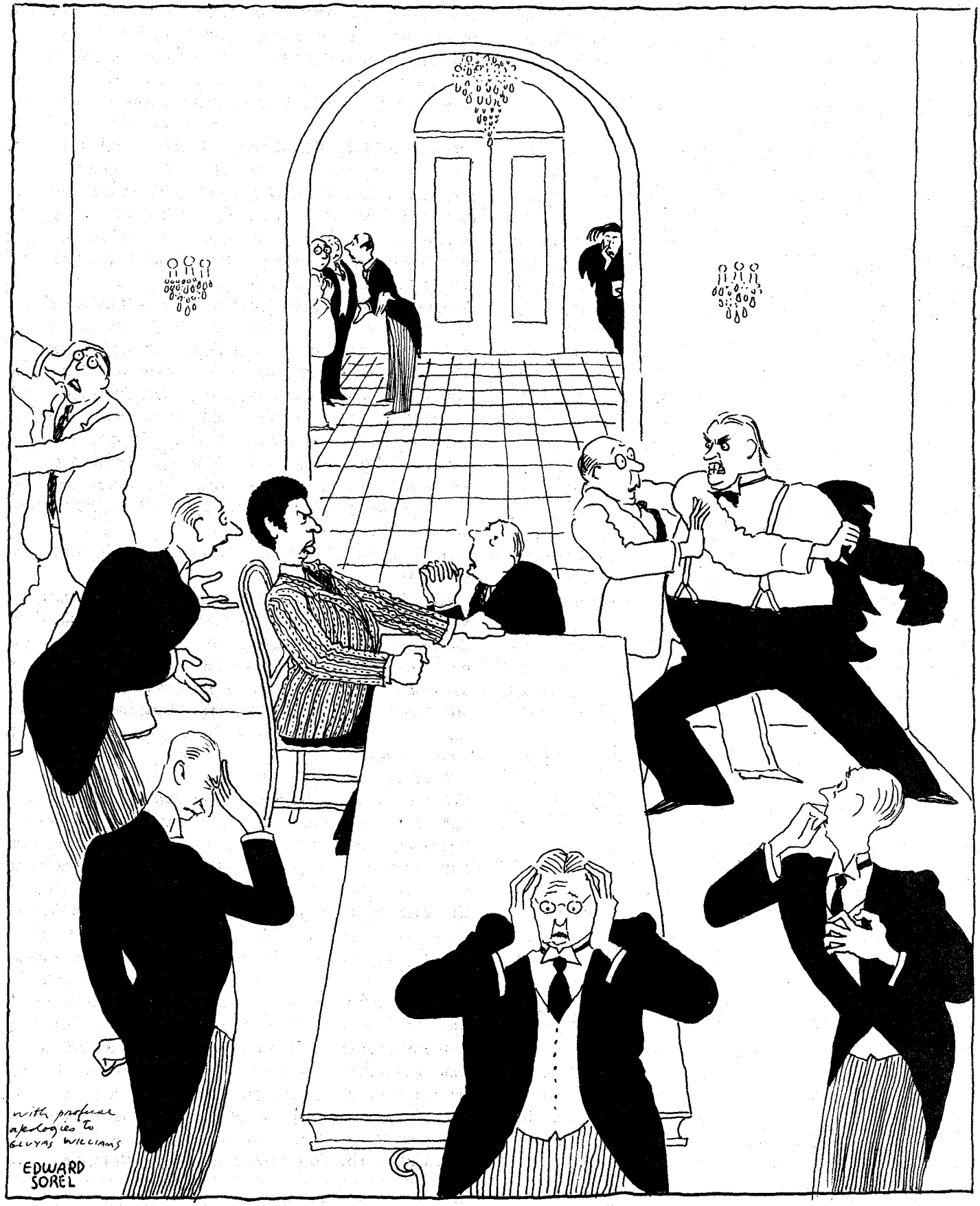
Industrial Crisis

EDWARD SOREL



Si Newhouse Jr., new owner of *The New Yorker*, informs the editors that henceforth, a business reply card will be stapled into the magazine.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Bournemouth, England

As I was striving to ingest a leisurely breakfast in this most genteel and restrained of South Coast resorts, some comedian went to all the trouble of throwing a "bomb" from a speeding car at my hotel. The infernal device proved to be no more than an alarm clock wired up to a defunct telephone book. But since the building housed most of the senior delegates to Margaret Thatcher's annual party conference, there was soon a terrific show of dogs, electronic screens, grim uniforms and other modern design features. The British middle class, which elected and re-elected Thatcher by fairly convincing majorities, is now in the process of asking itself whether all the drama, sacrifice and hysteria has been worthwhile.

A good deal of this has to do with the intensifying ruggedness of everyday life, exemplified by the unemployment statistics, the abysmal state of cities and social services and the widely remarked decline of what is mildly called "civility." A distinct but related school of moderate criticism points to the authoritarian style reflected in Thatcher's contempt for the Cabinet, impatience with Parliament, overreliance on police and bureaucratic power to combat dissent and a barely concealed disdain for public opinion. The high point, for this school, was a rumored quarrel between Thatcher and the Queen over sanctions against South Africa, with the Queen in the antiapartheid corner. This quarrel may never have taken place, but it's no secret that Her Majesty thinks that one Queen is enough, and that there are misgivings in high places about Thatcher's attitude in this and other matters on what might be called the compassion agenda. Concern in this quarter is more for the maintenance of a stable social contract than anything else, but in a class society those things count.

But the great Tory blunder, and the one on which the next election is likely to turn, is the too-often demonstrated subservience to Ronald Reagan. In the past few weeks it was disclosed that there had been no military need for America to use British bases for the bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi, and that Vice Adm. John Poindexter's disinformation exercise was tried on the British Foreign Office as well as on the U.S. media. In other words, those U.S. bombers made that "perilous" flight from the North Sea only to enable the Administration to claim that the United States was not friendless, when a simple run from the deck of a Sixth Fleet carrier would have done the trick—while all the time an artless national security adviser was funneling ill-crafted forgeries to Downing Street. Those late discoveries were announced by two extremely reactionary publications—respectively *Jane's Fighting Ships* and the *Sunday Telegraph*—but their lateness has done little to dispel the popular belief that Thatcher is a gullible pushover for the sick old cowboy in the White House.

I talked with a member of Thatcher's government here who told me he thought the Libya raid and its consequences had been more damaging to the Conservatives than any other single episode. The presence of U.S. bases in Britain is not governed by any formal treaty and has never been voted on by Parliament. Until recently, quite a number of voters did not really know of the bases, and they were startled to learn of the extent of the U.S. military presence. Now that the bases have become a live issue, their proponents have been put on the defensive. The leaders of the centrist alliance between the Liberal and Social Democratic Parties, for example, imagined that they had developed a compromise formula on nuclear weaponry and NATO strategy designed to attract wavering Tories while keeping within cold war assumptions. But they wholly underestimated the strength of feeling on the question, and at the Liberal fall conference were subjected to a humiliating floor defeat by delegates demanding a nuclear-free defense policy. At the Labor conference the demand to close all U.S. nuclear bases was carried by a vast majority, with Denzil Davies, the party's spokesman on defense, saying that they would be shut within one year of Labor coming to power. That vote would probably have gone the way it did even without the amazingly crass intervention of Caspar Weinberger, who appeared on BBC the night the conference opened and babbled about the decline of the West if the voters were ever irresponsible enough to choose Labor. The general view of this is summarized in the often heard opinion that even those who voted for Thatcher had not voted for Weinberger.

All of this took place before the grotesque betrayal of Western Europe that was perpetrated at Reykjavik. Even the dullest observer, inclined to give the Atlantic alliance the benefit of the doubt, could see that Reagan threw away an agreement on missiles in Europe for the sake of a dogmatic attachment to a pointless, wasteful, dangerous scheme for the militarization of space. A fine day's work, for which many thanks.

Thatcher, whose self-righteousness and arrogance in office have, as I say, become a campaign issue in their own right, does not appear to have noticed anything has changed. She clings to her sub-Churchillian rhetoric about deterrence and appeals to the ripest chauvinist sentiments by pointing out that a nonnuclear Britain would leave France as the only European nuclear power. Britain outgunned by the French! Every man to the Channel ports! Remember Waterloo! There may be some mileage in this, but it can't obscure the essential problem. Defenders of nuclear deterrence were able for most of a generation to get people to swallow or overlook the appalling risks. Their favorite argument, when they bothered to argue at all, was that such weapons were an ultimate guarantee of national sovereignty. But over the past decade or so, and particularly in the past five years, it has been shown repeatedly that the weapons and bases are the occasions for repeated compromises and violations of that sovereignty. The Tories could get away with losing one or the other of those arguments, but not both of them. The rise of a potential antinuclear majority in Britain is therefore one of the greatest unintended consequences of the Reagan revolution.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Quills From a Porcupine

DOUGLAS CRASE

THE COMPLETE PROSE OF MARIANNE MOORE. *Edited by Patricia C. Willis. Viking. 724 pp. $24.95.*

It's hard enough to say what poetry is for. But what do we make of a poet's prose, especially the taxing syntax of Marianne Moore? Imagine 462 prose items packed into 692 pages, picture them dense with "independence of the subjunctive, and many another select defect" (the phrase is hers), then picture them denser still with her famously relentless quotations, and you will understand if I answer my question by quoting (the habit is catching) from one of her best-known poems: "it is a privilege to see so/much confusion."

Except what looks like confusion turns out, when you find it in the full expanse of *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore*, to be impressively clear. Credit Patricia C. Willis, the editor, who seems to have included just about everything Moore published that you could define as prose, and who has presented it in sober, though sensibly adjusted, chronological order.

It is not what Moore would have done. The poet who in 1967 excluded "only" 120 poems from her *Complete Poems* left us no reason to think she would be less willful with her prose. In *Predilections* she linked reviews together to form essays, and mixed those with other pieces in such a way as to suggest that serene institution, a poet's essays—the detached, the Olympian reflection on matters aesthetical. In *A Marianne Moore Reader* she emphasized a more extroverted prose (a piece from *Vogue*, one from *Harper's Bazaar*) and, fitting her late image as the Mary Poppins poet in a tricorn hat who once threw out the first ball of the season at Yankee Stadium, she even included, over the objections of her editors, the correspondence with Ford Motor Company in which she proposed archly inappropriate names for the product Ford would later market as the Edsel. The new *Complete Prose* corrects both screwball caricatures by a method the poet herself applied to individual poems or essays, a method she calls—though she is quoting someone else of course—"an accuracy of abundance."

As Moore practiced it, this meant you might learn first what was *not* in abundance ("certain of Marsden Hartley's stark austerities not here, are preferred by us to some that are," she writes in a 1925 review). So the reader should know there are no interviews, no letters and no selections from her reading diaries in the *Complete Prose*. There's no fiction, either, unless you agree with the publisher that eight short stories by an undergraduate in the Bryn Mawr literary magazine add up to a showing in the form. And not much in the way of memoirs, though there is the sparkling, if decorous account of her tenure from 1925 to 1929 as editor of *The Dial*, present at the creation of Modernist American poetry. She "was our saint," said William Carlos Williams in retrospect. "She is one of the angels," said Wallace Stevens before he even met her. She's a "hysterical virgin," said Hart Crane at the time, when she was meddling with his manuscripts.

She was also the most engagingly original of the great Modernist poets born in the United States. Her first poems appeared in 1915 (the same year as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Sunday Morning") and one of them, "To a Steam Roller," started out like this:

> The illustration
> is nothing to you without the
> application.

Thus began, as Eliot would point out a few years later, a brilliant use of "the curious jargon produced in America by universal university education." Today, this college vernacular has been so fully integrated into the American tradition that if you found those lines from "To a Steam Roller" lying around loose somewhere you might think they had been dropped by John Ashbery or one of his acolytes. But in 1915 nobody had written poetry this way before. "I want to know," wrote Ezra Pound in a letter, "whether you are working on Greek quantitative measures or on René Ghil or simply by ear (if so a very good ear)."

It was a good ear, one of the best; and Moore put it to work not just in her poetry but in a distinctive criticism that likewise answered to what the ear hears, as well as to what the eye sees. It is this criticism that dominates the *Complete Prose*, from a first, brief essay published in 1916 to an exiguous appreciation of Christopher Smart published two years after she died in 1972 at the age of 84. Moore once remarked that, whatever she wrote in prose, it would really be an essay. Apparently she was right, because the five kinds of criticism in this volume are distinguished not so much by form or quality as they are by length: essays of about five pages; reviews of two or three pages; comments, of a page or so, from *The Dial*; brief mentions, of a paragraph, also from *The Dial*; and blurbs. Yes, the "complete blurbs," and even these are little essays, as in the one for Hugh Kenner: "Entertaining and fearless, he can be too fearless, but we need him."

Since it is mostly criticism, the *Complete Prose* doesn't reveal what Pound was anxious to discover, the source of Moore's breakthrough poetics. But it does corroborate her poetics in ways that will make it easier and more fun to understand her. Easier, because now we have access to statements that were never reprinted, like one announcing the young poet's belief that it's the *accented* syllable that is boring, while what we call the unaccented syllable is—not. And more fun, because now we can add to the allusive resonance, the "subject rhyme," of favorite poems. One of these is "The Steeple Jack":

> Dürer would have seen a reason for
> living
> in a town like this, with eight
> stranded whales
> to look at; with the sweet sea air
> coming into your house
> on a fine day.

Moore herself stretched the resonance of this poem when she told a student that the eight whales she had in mind had been stranded—where?—either in Sheepshead Bay, she said, or Brooklyn Harbor. But Dürer? In the *Complete Prose* there is a comment Moore wrote for *The Dial* in praise of an exhibit, then at the New York Public Library, of prints by Dürer:

Douglas Crase is the author of The Revisionist *(Little, Brown).*

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> His mere journeyings are fervent—to the Dutch coast to look at a stranded whale that was washed to sea before he was able to arrive.

All this time, then, the word Dürer has been a subject rhyme—for the conjunction of fantasy with detail that we associate with his work, of course, but also for fervor in research, and for our own fortunate "accessibility to experience" (whales in this case) that the poet celebrated in another poem, "New York."

Of course, if it's true that life consists in what you are thinking about all day (Emerson said it was), then the *Complete Prose* also represents a partial life of the mind of Marianne Moore. (In one month *The Dial* carried one review, one comment and three brief mentions all by Moore.) And because she was so deeply involved with the fortunes of Eliot, Stevens, Williams and the rest, it is also a life of Modernist poetry in North America, from its inception with Pound to its capitulation to Auden. There are nine reviews of Eliot, from *Prufrock* in 1918 to *Practical Cats* thirty years later; six reviews of Williams; three of H.D.; five of Stevens. *Eliot*: "he seems to move troutlike through a multiplicity of foreign objects." *Williams*: his work is marked by "a concise, energetic disgust, a kind of intellectual hauteur which one usually associates with the French." *Stevens*: "Mr. Stevens is never inadvertently crude; one is conscious, however, of a deliberate bearishness." *Cummings*: "a kind of verbal topiary-work." *H.D.*: "actuality . . . being lost in the sense of spectacle." *Pound*: "To cite passages is to pull one quill from a porcupine."

Moore is sometimes cited today as an authority for a gentle, descriptive criticism in which the real opinions of the critic are indiscernible, to say nothing of his or her standards. "I have been accused of substituting appreciation for criticism, and justly," she writes in 1958, "since there is nothing I dislike more than the exposé or any kind of revenge." Maybe the motive wasn't revenge, but judging from the "accuracy of abundance" in the *Complete Prose* her victims may not have known the difference—as when she makes fun of poet Vachel Lindsay for his technique or novelist Maxwell Bodenheim for his attitudes.

> The writer's attitude of pronouncement reaches its apex in the statement made by one of his *dramatis personae*,

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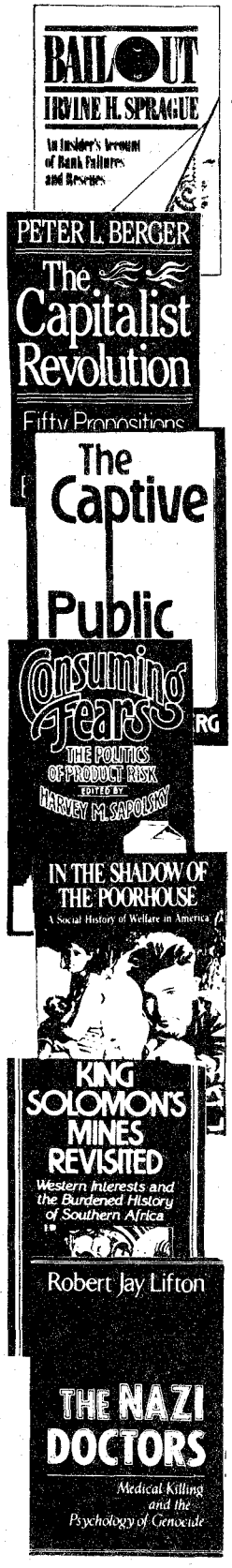
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> that there is zest in bagging a woman who is one's equal in wits; the possibility of bagging a superior in wits not being allowed to confuse the issue.

And here, one of *The Dial*'s unsigned brief mentions, is her pre-emptive strike against the school of poets to be known later as The Fugitives.

> *Chills and Fever*, by John Crowe Ransom (Knopf). Unrewarding dissonances, mountebank persiflage, mock medieval minstrelsy, and shreds of elegance disturbingly suggestive of now this, now that contemporary bard, deprive one of the faculty to diagnose this "dangerous" phenomenon to which one has exposed oneself.

The strike failed. But it does illustrate how deeply Moore was engaged in the campaign to create and consolidate the Modernist aesthetic in U.S. poetry.

Still, to regard this book as primarily a concordance or a life would be to imply that a poet's prose is somehow ancillary to the poetry. That's a familiar attitude, predicated sometimes on the notion that poets should leave the "business" of criticism to those who are in it as a business, and sometimes on the notion that poets just can't think. One of these notions may even be true; but Moore, joyously quoting Eliot quoting Pound, actively believed that criticism and poetry are not exclusive ("They proceed as two feet of one biped"), perhaps not even separable. Criticism, she writes, "inspires creation." More than that, "a genuine achievement in criticism is an achievement in creation"—her own prose being the case that proves her point, if not exactly in the way she meant. Her reviews, and even her essays on poetics (with enchanted titles like "Humility, Concentration, and Gusto" or "Idiosyncrasy and Technique"), don't offer the kinds of intellectual recipes that explain poetry so much as they offer further examples of what goes on during poetry—Moore's poetry, to be exact. In the way that *Democratic Vistas* is more Whitman, or *The Necessary Angel* more Stevens, so the prose in these pages is *more* Marianne Moore.

No surprise then, if it can be as recalcitrant as the poetry. Moore is well known for saying that "one should be as clear as one's natural reticence allows one to be." It is easy to be amused by this, but it was not mere perversity on her part. For a woman who had embarked on an aesthetically exposed life for which there were few if any feminine models in her country, style was a serious business. Style was not the result of freedom, it was the instrument of freedom.

> When an artist is willing that the expressiveness of his work be overlooked by any but those who are interested enough to find it, he has freedom in which to realize without interference, conceptions which he personally values.

And if this sounds closeted, remember we are talking poetics, not politics (when she was 27, so reports one of the thousands of unpublished letters, Moore was climbing onto the roof of a "portable house" at a Pennsylvania fair to reattach a suffragette banner that had been recently downed). No, her reticence is designed to induce you to let her proceed until it is too late to do anything but catch up with her. Or as she puts it in one of the many collectibles waiting in this book:

> Poetry is an unintelligible unmistakable vernacular like the language of the animals—a system of communication whereby a fox with a turkey too heavy for it to carry, reappears shortly with another fox to share the booty.

No surprise, either, if the way Moore organizes an essay-review is also designed to share the booty (not to mention the burden) with the reader. "The objective is architecture, not demolition," she writes, indicating that she knew very well what we were likelier to think. Yet essays like "Henry James as a Characteristic American," "Abraham Lincoln and the Art of the Word" and the earlier "Sir Francis Bacon" do eventually reveal their architecture in paragraphs the way her poems reveal an architecture in stanzas. What appears at first to be an overturned file of quotations is really a stanzaic arrangement in which the quotations probably do more work by virtue of reassociation and antithesis than they did in the original. It is no coincidence that her first real review is built on the conceit of suggesting to Mr. Eliot how he might *rearrange* his book.

Readers, and I am one of them, who have been vexed by Moore's notorious revisions of her poems will recognize that she is following a similar impulse in this rearrangement of quotations into prose. In fact, given the examples and the dicta of the *Complete Prose*, we

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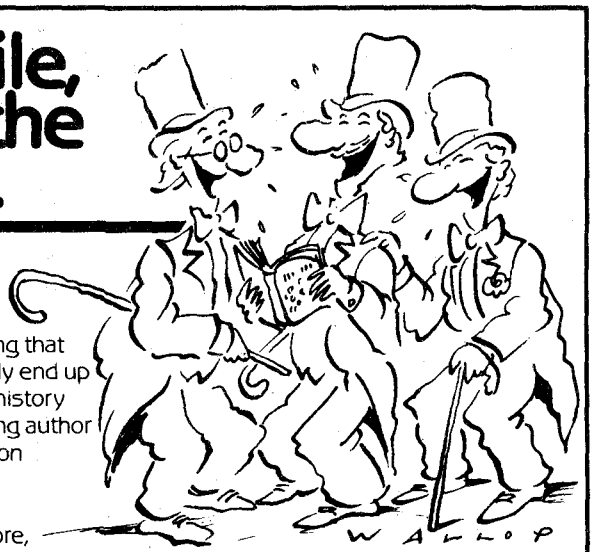
Meanwhile, back at the Palace....



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may have to consider that she knew exactly what she was doing to us.

> It may be true that the author's revisions make it harder, not easier, for hurried readers; but flame kindles to the eye that contemplates it.

There's a decidedly spiritual tone to that, and it recurs so frequently in the prose that I suspect Moore saw her rearrangements and revisions as a means to detain the mind—otherwise rapt with commerce—for decidedly spiritual ends. To rearrange a subject is truly to contemplate it. It is one thing in a review or an essay to express opinions, because opinions are easy to come by and much like everyone else's; most of the time they *are* everyone else's. It is another thing to rearrange, because choices are both morally and technically interesting, with the added chance of being original. This is the added chance Marianne Moore was always ready to take, and (in the rearranged words of another) she lets us know exactly why: "The 'ability to be drunk with a sudden realization of value in things others never notice' can metamorphose our detestable reasonableness and offset a whole planetary system of deadness."

If deadness was the evil, the salvation was idiosyncrasy, the "indigenous gusto" which, as she writes in praise of Auden, makes a good poet "unable to be dull." The problem is, salvation doesn't matter much if it's for poets only—a decent, realistic judgment that is implicit in this poet's statement to the readers of *Seventeen*: "Example is needed, not counsel." In fact, when you examine the "screwball" image of Moore's later life from this perspective, it doesn't look crazy after all, but exemplary. Like her poems, like her tenure at *The Dial*, her public prose and her public activities are examples of how Americans might contemplate the startling details of their own existence: the St. Louis Cardinals or the Camperdown Elm in Prospect Park; the "impassioned emancipator" M. Carey Thomas of Bryn Mawr or the middleweight champion Floyd Patterson; even the art of individual dress (just think of the effect on readers of *Women's Wear Daily* who learned under Moore's byline that "Whatever the cut, width, or foot, the wearer should be able to step with assurance—as Dante says, like a crane—'come una crana'").

So the woman who was among the

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first of poets to celebrate "plain American which cats and dogs can read" went on in her prose and life to demonstrate what a Dürer could do with the mix of fantasy and calculation to be seen in ourselves. As she said of one Modernist colleague: "In his modestly emphatic respect for America he corroborates Henry James' conviction that young people should 'stick fast and sink up to their necks in everything their own countries and climates can give,' and his feeling for the *place* lends poetic authority to an illusion of ours, that sustenance may be found here, which is adapted to artists." This was no jingoist or isolationist attitude, for already in her time she had seen how it was sublimely moral: a people who don't think themselves worth saving aren't going to care much about the rest of the world either. "The thing is to see the vision and not deny it," she writes; "to care and admit that we do." In a lifetime of seeing and admitting, Moore was so spirited and yet so careful to avoid hyperbole that she has earned the right to the last word, as she herself writes it (reviewing a very different stylist) in *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore*: "But the book is a triumph, and all of us, that is to say a great many of us, would do well to read it." □

'Fake It! Fake It!'

MAUREEN MULLARKEY

SELLING CULTURE: Bloomingdale's, Diana Vreeland, and the New Aristocracy of Taste in Reagan's America. *By Debora Silverman. Pantheon. 175 pp. $17.95.*

Selling Culture is a bare-knuckled analysis of the ways people with money—in this instance, the *haute couture* crowd—manipulate culture to entrench and advance their own privileges. Fashion designers rig themselves out as captains of industry and, together with retail magnates and members of the social register, concoct cultural experiences to bring home the gravy.

Silverman views the sway of this glitzy coterie as a peculiarly Reaganite contrivance: "Reagan's elite colonizes culture for consumerism." The traffic between high fashion and high culture results in "a debasement of historical consciousness" that stimulates the national taste for fantasy and counterfeit realities. Silverman's scrutiny of Bloomingdale's tango with the Metropolitan Museum of Art is intended as a microcosm of the "politics and culture of wish fulfillment" practiced by the Reagan Administration and typified by "the anti-ethics of the 1980's."

In *The Gilded Age*, Mark Twain created Colonel Sellers and Senator Dilworthy to provide a composite picture of the character and moral temper of America during the corrupt Grant Administration. Silverman uses a similar device to explore the convergence of politics and culture in our own gilded age: a dual focus on Diana Vreeland (socialite-turned-editor-turned-museum-consultant) and Nancy Reagan. Silverman's argument hinges, to a considerable degree, on how seriously we can take these two women as metaphors of the age or as cultural forces in their own right.

The case against Nancy Reagan rests on her wall-to-wall carpeting and shopping binges. Silverman goes to some length to make equations between the *ancien régime* and Nancy's interior decoration extravaganzas ("brand new Louie Schmooey gilded coffee tables") or the antiegalitarian implications of her wardrobe:

> In June 1982 . . . the Reagans also hosted a party in Paris at the American embassy for President and Mrs. Mitterrand. Nancy Reagan greeted the guests in a Galanos couture creation—a black satin tunic over rhinestone-studded black satin knickers. The enemy of the sans-culottes had now returned with a vengeance.

Yet apart from that one possibility of wit on Nancy's part—and despite the book's hearty reserves of antagonism—she remains indistinguishable from any other expensive wife.

Silverman's handling of Diana Vreeland is another matter. The fact that Vreeland can be made to seem significant is a seduction worthy of La Pompadour. What is interesting here is not so much Vreeland herself—who never dressed before lunch until *Harper's Bazaar* of-

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fered her a job—as it is the interplay of society-page networking, avidity and sequined bunkum that mark Vreeland's tenure at the Met. The book examines in detail five exhibits organized by Vreeland since 1980: "Costumes of China: The Ching Dynasty," "The Eighteenth-Century Woman," "La Belle Epoque," "Man and the Horse" and "Twenty-Five Years of Yves Saint Laurent." The whole is required reading for anyone who would understand the affinity between our ciboriums of culture and the marketplace.

Vreeland's thirty years' experience as an editor at *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* culminates in a single guiding principle: "Now everything is power and money and how to use them both. . . . We must not be afraid of snobbism and luxury." Vreeland applies this platinum rule to her role as special consultant to the Metropolitan's Costume Institute, earning her ladyfingers by distorting costume history to accommodate big-name fashion merchandisers.

Silverman's update on what Edith Wharton called "varnished barbarism" begins with a cold look at the Met's Yves Saint Laurent retrospective. At the opening gala, 800 guests in full regimentals paid $500 each to parade in honor of an exhibit that was an unabashed advertising campaign for the dauphin of designer labels. (Marvin Traub, chair of Bloomie's, served as adviser to the project.) Staged as a fund raiser and attendance-booster for the museum, the show was a testimonial to the nobility of both the *couturier*'s craft and his clientele. For the festivities, Saint Laurent's fabric supplier draped the Met's Great Hall in 15,000 yards of silk. The dinner bill ran to $80,000. The evening's entire tab was picked up by Charles of the Ritz, Saint Laurent's perfume licensee. (N.B. Laurent's new designer cigarette is named "Ritz.") On hand were the usual dowagers, diplomats, moguls, gilt-jobbers and idols of consumption who show up at inaugurals, on the lawns of Texas millionaires, in *Women's Wear Daily* and at such ambassadorial functions as the late Roy Cohn's annual birthday party (co-hosted in 1985 by Vreeland and the Reagans at the Palladium).

Silverman's detailed discussion of "the annexing of museum culture for marketing" opens with the Met-Bloomingdale's China spectaculars. Neither Bloomingdale's nor the Met lost time cashing in on the 1979 trade agreement with the People's Republic. Within two months of each other, they produced mutually beneficial displays of "timeless, aristocratic" Chinese culture. In September 1980, Bloomingdale's began promoting handicraft items supposedly culled from the back alleys of Beijing. But these dynastic dazzlers, representing the unbroken tradition of the emperors, had been designed by Bloomingdale's in accordance with the public's fantasies of prerevolutionary China:

> The objects that captured the "essence" of China were themselves first sketched out on Lexington Avenue, and then they were made in China exclusively for Bloomingdale's in manufacturies set up especially for American export.

To give credibility to the artifice, the Met lent a portion of its collection of precious robes to Bloomingdale's to be used as props for the duration of the sales pitch.

The Met excursion extended Bloomingdale's presentation of China as a world distinguished only by its luxury. The show spanned the entire Manchu reign, some 300 years, yet the exhibit omitted any information differentiating

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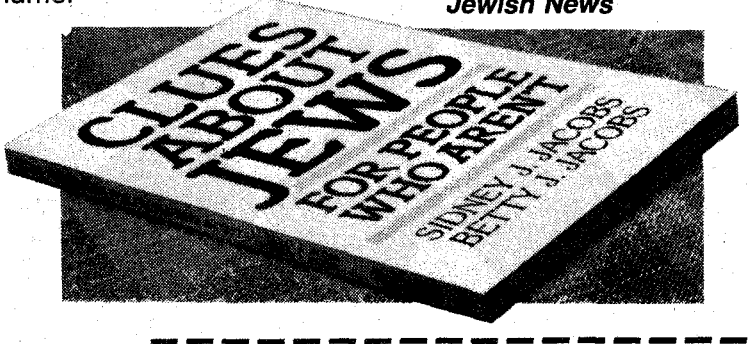

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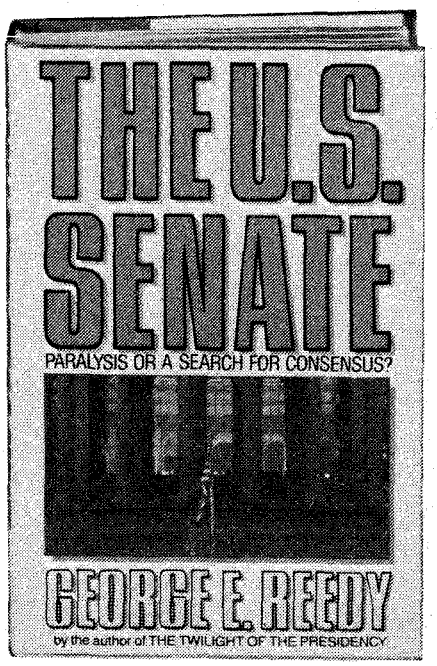
the various rulers and their historical contexts. Dreary specificity was not on the agenda of a historical consultant who chirped, as Vreeland did in discussing the show: "I'm looking for the most far-fetched perfection . . . and I'm terrible on facts." Vreeland's cavalier approach yielded at least one substantial gaffe which altered the public's understanding of the meaning and function of the robes: traditionally, these were worn only for private worship, never for display. They were covered by a plain black overcoat that permitted only the border of the emperor's robe to show. According to Silverman, clothing was mixed and matched indiscriminately, and no Chinese wife or courtesan ever wore "an 'outfit' like the ones created by Vreeland." At the time, *New York Times* reviewer Rita Reif noted that the mannequins had the "layered look" of contemporary fashion designers rather than the style of any Chinese historical period.

In attempting to reconstitute imperial court life, Vreeland drenched the exhibition hall in a powerful smell that she hailed as a distillation of ancient Chinese civilization—her friend Saint Laurent's new perfume, "Opium." This, in the face of the fact that opium was imported into China, in humiliating defiance of Chinese law, by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western merchants. But historical literacy is bad showmanship and Vreeland is in the grand American tradition epitomized by P.T. Barnum: humbug sells.

As with China, so with France, the eighteenth century and la Belle Epoque. In a concerted burst of Francophilia, both Bloomie's and the Met paid homage to French elegance and luxury. Between Bloomie's "Fête de France" and the Met's "Eighteenth-Century Woman," France was re-created as a cache of Limoges china, Baccarat crystal, *couturier* splendor and rococo romance. At the Met, the eighteenth century was a pageant of tarts in fancy dress, diddling Kings and Great Thinkers with a fleur-de-lis.

The silliest of Vreeland's costume epics, "Man and the Horse," was a blunt statement of the museum's role as a stimulant to commerce. The show had nothing to do with the age-old functional pairing, in agriculture or transportation, of men and their work animals. It was instead a barefaced commemoration of the Old Money look and a spur to the would-be-horsey set. It was also a splendid advertising opportunity for Ralph Lauren, the show's only corporate sponsor. In return for $350,000 from Lauren, the Met affixed his name and his Polo logo to all publicity associated with the exhibit, even to the walls of the galleries. In effect, Lauren underwrote a fashion show glorifying riding clothes—the proto-sportswear of the landed gentry—and attached his corporate insignia to it. Discarding even the pretense of historical consequence, Vreeland assembled a "history" of Polo's stylistic origins and served up a preview of the forthcoming Polo fashions.

In these Vreelandian solemnizations of over-the-counter culture, history is a scenic backdrop to entertainment and self-delusion. History shrinks to a succession of luxuries through which we can purchase—in reproduction at the museum shop or in department stores—a simulated lineage that befogs the facts of both past and present. Courtesy toward another people's past and our own is sacrificed to the drive to keep the merchandise moving. This imperative is



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particularly keen when the item for sale is our own heightened self-image.

Selling Culture is lively, intelligent and indignant. As an extended anecdote about a specific set of cultural events, it is excellent. It is most useful when establishing the connection between museums and department stores as staging grounds for the merger of cultural and economic values. It begins to slip, however, in its effort to pin this fusion on "Reaganite political culture." Suspending chunks of historical memory, the book gives only the barest nod to the complex growth of consumption as a cultural ideal over the past century. Intent on its own *J'accuse*, it presents a particular moment in the commercialization of American culture as if it had sprung *ex nihilo* from Reagan's Ministry of Truth. High fashion's return to favor is described in conspiratorial terms: aristocratic posturing marks a new "movement" that is "centered in New York with direct links, in both personnel and themes, to the center of political power in the White House of Ronald and Nancy Reagan." In the end, the book stops short of identifying the larger enemy and settles for an easy target.

Silverman takes aim from behind some skimpy bushes. One of these is the censure of Nancy Reagan for her "nouveau riche chic" and suburban taste. Grabbing Veblen by the wrong end, the book upholds a double standard in First Ladies. Jackie Kennedy, whose hobnobbing and spending were no less lavish than Nancy's, is regarded as a genuine thoroughbred. Her "tasteful" and historically accurate redecoration of the White House proves her seemly attachment to "an older tradition of aristocracy and obligation, of the moral exchange between the affluent and the less fortunate." No mention is made of the way Jackie's curatorial activities provided her husband with exquisite opportunities for the manipulation of his own image. Frequently photographed amid the furnishings and bibelots of Washington and Lincoln, J.F.K. ratified the myth of Camelot, integrating the ersatz aristocracy of the Boston Irish with the heroes of the presidential past. Here, the book's complaint seems to be directed less at the cynical inflation of a political image than at the failure to do it in a Protestant way, from under cover of the social gospel.

Nancy's wardrobe is discussed as a symbol of Reaganomics. Jackie's wardrobe and the Kennedys' own adoption of images of royalty are overlooked out of regard for the social programs of the New Frontier. Despite the book's apparent disdain for the spectacle of wealth and image-mongering in the White House, its real grievance is the absence of noblesse oblige.

Vreeland, whose professed motto is "FAKE IT! FAKE IT!," was hired by the Met in 1972. She is less a symptom of the age of Reagan than the natural outcome of the policies of Thomas Hoving, circus barker for the Met from 1968 to 1978. It was Hoving who set the museum on its accelerated course of expansion and commercialization, bridging the gap between the Met and the Felt Forum. Hoving is only mentioned in passing, yet he is a choice example of the patronage and transmutation of values among American mercantile and urban elites that form the core of Silverman's material. His father had been both head of Bonwit Teller's and chairman of the board of Tiffany's. Hoving himself was the friend and boating partner of Mayor Lindsay, who ordained him Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. It was a short hop from there to the directorship of the Met. Then on to the editorship of *Connoisseur*, a full-color blurb for upper-crust pleasures and pricey kitsch.

Americans' attraction to the symbolic value of goods, that touch of procured class, has been catered to by department stores since their inception, in the 1870s and 1880s. They were designed to behave like Bloomie's, addressing the public not simply as users of goods but as consumers of images and sensations. With advertising also in full flower by the 1880s, the badlands of publicity were selling Americans false images of themselves a century before Reagan.

Of equal longevity is the more subtle salesmanship of museums. The narrowing of the concept of culture to the sensibilities and preferences of the propertied class is another legacy of the Gilded Age. Determined to charge Reagan as a polluter of culture, Silverman takes at face value the "civic virtue" and "paternalist good faith" of the profiteers who gave us our museums: "The Gilded Age elite, however corrupt and rapacious, adhered to assumptions of moral duty, conscience and the obligations of wealth." The book accepts the Genteel Tradition's tonic view of the arts as "an agent of collective moral uplift and social humanization." It ignores Alan Trachtenberg's argument that museums

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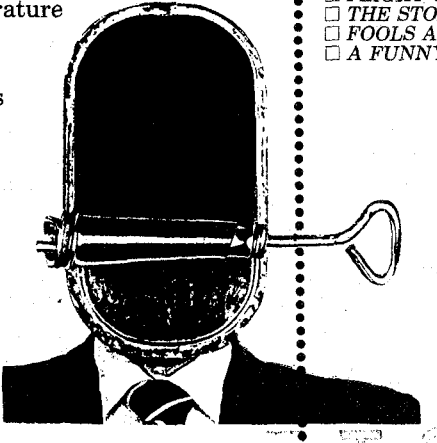

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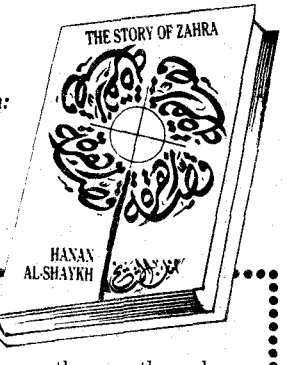

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in this country served as agents of pacification. They were public vehicles for the dispersal of a refinement intended to help sustain the social order and allay social conflict during the days of the great railroad strikes, rapid urbanization and the growth of organized labor. With ingenious rectitude, the robber barons bequeathed to the unruly masses compensation for powerlessness—the means for self-improvement, not through the restructuring of social relations but through soothing access to the tastes and manners (and, ultimately, buying habits) of their employers.

The trend toward a consumer culture began before the turn of the century and has been going at a gallop since. So has the manufacture of images and the dissolution of truth in public life that is the raison d'être of those images. Presidents were hawked, electorates brokered and bargained for like pork bellies long before 1980. It's no surprise that the buying public should have installed in the Oval Office the nationally advertised trademark of its own commodity visions. While Silverman's chastisements are necessary, too much attention is spent on gossip column stuff. Not enough is given to the larger cultural context in which these events occur. Insofar as culture is considered something one acquires, proof of income or trained taste, the Met is as good a place to peddle it as Bloomie's or Bonwit's. And if culture is understood as the values we seek and the structures in which those values are crystallized, then Ronald Reagan and all our Diana Vreelands are not contaminants at all. They are fitting emblems of our civilization. □

Laura, Stella and Ray

MARILYN FRENCH

LOVE, DEATH, AND THE CHANGING OF THE SEASONS. *By Marilyn Hacker. Arbor House. 212 pp. $30. Paper $7.95.*

The recounting of a love affair through sonnets has a tradition that dates back to Petrarch. Petrarch's *Canzoniere* centered on his love for a woman he called Laura, who seems more occasion than creature, an idea of woman figuring in poems offering an idea of love as exalted, unable to be consummated or even requited, and ending tragically. What is really celebrated in Petrarch's love poems is the poet's skill, his art and his own emotions—passion sustained interminably and hopelessly.

Petrarch's sonnets inspired a host of imitators in England during the Renaissance. Starting with Sir Thomas Wyatt, many poets attempted the sonnet, and some tried their hands at sonnet sequences. Samuel Daniel and Sir Walter Raleigh both wrote sonnet sequences as compliments to their patrons—Daniel to the Countess of Pembroke and Raleigh to Queen Elizabeth. But love poetry requires the impetus of erotic passion, even if its object is as slightly known and sketchily depicted as Petrarch's Laura or Dante's Beatrice; lacking that, Daniel's and Raleigh's sequences seem now to lack everything, and are read today less for pleasure than for knowledge. Oddly, this is true also of Spenser, whose sonnet sequence, the *Amoretti*, was written for Elizabeth Boyle, the woman he was courting and finally married (although the *Amoretti* end with the traditional note of heartbreak). The poems must have been a flattering gift to the lady, written out fine and bound in silk perhaps; but with only a couple of exceptions they do not live for us now.

What characterizes those sonnets that still retain felt life is not only a high degree of poetic skill but something more—an edge of emotion keen and familiar enough to penetrate the concealing gauze of idealized love; a conceit that is unusual and clever, as in Michael Drayton's well-known "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part"; careful observation of scene, as in Surrey's,

> The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings
> With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale,
> The nightingale with feathers new she sings,
> The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.

or intimations of social realities, as in Wyatt's,

> Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,

Marilyn French's most recent book is Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals *(Summit).*

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As well as I, may spend his time in vain.
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written, her fair neck round about:
"*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame."

The two sonnet sequences from this period that live today—Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* and Shakespeare's sonnets—share certain characteristics. Both offer a sense of context built from concrete details, a narrative line or plot and vividly expressed, wide-ranging emotion. Sidney refers to a tourney in which he participated; he mocks Lord Rich, Penelope's husband; he conjures the pains and perils of adultery. Behind Shakespeare's poems stands a complex drama, the details of which we can only guess. But we know the boy was beautiful and from the nobility, the poet mature and lowly, a mere actor who goes here and there and makes himself "a motley to the view." We know the beloved possesses "one thing to my purpose nothing," having been "pricked . . . out for women's pleasure," and that he seduces the poet's mistress and is himself seduced by another poet. Such references, however scanty and tantalizing, provide the backdrop against which the ups and downs of passion are acted out, and give body to the emotional line.

In addition, these sonnets range along an entire gamut of feeling—from the highest pitch of desire, through poisonous jealousy, quarrels, estrangements, rage, unavoidable separations and renewed desire. They intimate what we know to be the truth about love and desire—that they do not occur in a vacuum or on an unvarying, exalted plane; they do not transcend life. They involve the body, and the world, as well as the emotions.

The sonnet sequence, indeed lyrical love poetry itself, has faded out of fashion. In our age of control the poetry of helplessness, which is what love poetry inevitably must be, is disdained. But John Berryman wrote a magnificent sonnet sequence in the 1940s (not published until the late 1960s), in a casual conversational style that masked the strictness of his form, recognizable iambic pentameter in the difficult Petrarchan rhyme scheme. (The Petrarchan form, with its minimal number of rhymes, is constricting in English, which has relatively few rhyming words.

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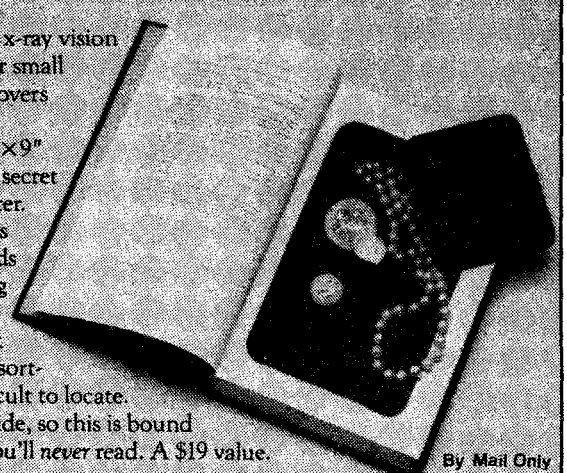

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It was modified early in the sixteenth century by Surrey and further refined by Shakespeare.) Berryman's poems allude to cities and countryside, newspaper reports, accidents, police cars, jukeboxes, parties, other people, drinking and work, especially the work of writing poetry—a twentieth-century innovation, identifying process and product. They have plot elements too: separations willed and involuntary; the fears, jealousy and frustrations inherent in adulterous affairs; but above all, and uniquely, the character of the adored Lise, who is no idealized Lady but a vivid, passionate, thinking woman.

And now we have a new sonnet sequence, Marilyn Hacker's *Love, Death, and the Changing of the Seasons*. Hacker clearly knows, and was perhaps influenced by, Berryman, but her prime model is Shakespeare, as the book's epigraph and many allusions testify. For it was Shakespeare who wrote love poems to a person of the same sex much younger than he, and whose sonnet "sequence" (as far as we know, he himself did not arrange it as one) contains poems addressed or referring to someone other than the beloved young man, a person we call the Dark Lady.

Hacker's sequence has a jazzy New York ambiance which is really a point of view, and it carries over into foreign scenes. In keeping with this, it is written in extremely slangy, sometimes "obscene" English, with equally slangy French interspersed. The emotional drama is interwoven with a detailed context of places and people and the events of daily life. The first lines set the tone:

> You hailed a cab outside the
> nondescript
> yuppie bar on Lexington to go
> downtown. Hug; hug: this time I
> brushed my lips
> just across yours, and fire down below
> in February flared.

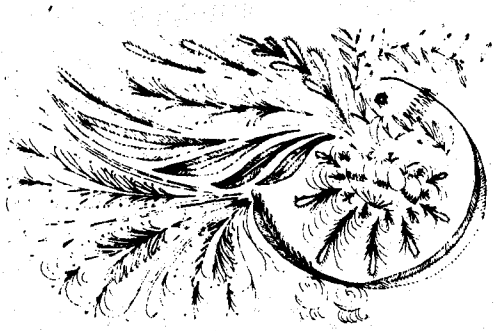
We learn in this poem that the beloved has "someone . . . waiting up at home"; the third sonnet, addressed to Bill, a friend, tells us that the beloved is 25; and the fifth, that the narrator is considerably older (42, we discover later). The narrator—at one point she calls herself Hack—has an 11-year-old daughter, Iva, who lives with her part of the year. Hack has been without erotic love for such a long time "that I honestly/wondered if I'd outgrown it." The beloved is Rachel, sometimes called Ray; the two met in a poetry class taught by Hack, in which Rachel is a student:

> Class night: osmotic energy
> got all the girls in gear. Tight forms to
> tame
> only made them write funkier, slang
> their diction down. I know some of
> them know
> (besides Elaine); still, it was brash to
> throw
> my Bic at you, and, oh dear, yes, I
> sang
> "You Are My Soul and My Heart's In-
> spiration,"
> to amplify the echoes in your poem.

The plot has considerable tension. Rachel lives with someone she calls her wife; Hack won't get involved with her because "infidelity's/the kind of bad taste that leaves a bad taste/worse than the mousebreath of a hangover." At the same time, "I want you so much I can taste it"; "I'm horny as a timber wolf in heat./Three times a night, I tangle up the sheet./I seem to flirt with everything with tits:/ . . . I think I ought to be kept off the street." Eventually, the two women do come together but the tension remains, a sense that the poet loves more than she is loved. Rachel admonishes her, "need me less and I'll

"There are very few of us in America who are able to see the faces of Soviet children . . . of Soviet workers, or old people, or students . . . (Let us) see the faces of one another. . ."
DANIEL BERRIGAN

Come, let us see the faces of one another



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want you more"; the poet helplessly explains, "I feel damned/by wanting you so much it looks like need."

The erotic element is strong in these poems, and expressed without self-censorship, in references to fucking and explicit descriptions of lovemaking. The entire account is frank. It does not blink at jealousy:

> I wish Kim hadn't made a pass at you.
> I wish she hadn't asked you not to tell me
> she had. Oh hell, I wish that she would call me,
> so she and I, *copines*, could talk it through.

or self-consciousness:

> *Il y avait au moins une trentaine de guoines*
> (that's "dykes" in French) come listen to me
> sound off (in French) and read some poetry
> (in English).

Both women worry, in a twenty-five-line villanelle, "Do people look at me and know I'm gay?" Rachel's unhappiness about not having children because she is a lesbian is addressed in three poems called "Having Kittens About Having Babies."

There is considerable movement in space, as the two women take cabs and buses around the city: Rachel lives in Chelsea and has a white bedroom; the poet lives uptown and has a blue bedroom. They visit bars and parks across the city, shop in Bloomingdale's. The poet goes to Paris, where she has an apartment in the Marais; to Vence in the south of France, where her close friend Julie lives; to Florence. The lovers go together to Provincetown (P'town), where they have friends. Rachel travels in her job, for a "Commissar" of a boss.

Berryman's sequence also details places, bits of the scene, allusions to the ongoing life of the lovers. But Hacker's is very much a *woman's* sonnet sequence: it embraces all elements of life equally. Nothing is too insignificant to be included. Rachel, Hack and Iva play ball in Central or Riverside Park; Iva listens to Cindi Lauper on headphones on the plane to France; Hack does the laundry; she writes out shopping lists, goes marketing, prepares meals (not just *lapin/à la moutarde*" and "cassoulet/with goose from Carcassonne, let *mijoter*/on the burner till nightfall" but even leftovers); she walks in the countryside around Vence; she picks blackberries. Hack teaches; Rachel works for the Commissar. Both women work composing poetry, and Hacker, like Berryman, identifies the act and its issue.

The lovers are embedded in a dense social context: the names and actions and words of friends and acquaintances weave through the poems. Besides the beloved Julie, Jacqueline (Jax) and Érzsi, there are Alice, Meg, Karyn, Sonny, Britt, David, Joanna, Kim and Catherine, the Countess, elegant and arrogant, who was still carousing at 92. The lovers also carouse. There is frequent heavy drinking; there are hangovers. There are deaths here, too, and two funerals. The lovers' world is, if anything, too peopled; it is hard for them to find time to be alone together. Comings and goings swirl around them, never glamorized, always recognizable. They quarrel in the car, while Iva sulks in the back seat; they have dinner with friends ("*magret de canard . . . escargots*"); they go dancing in gay bars; they make love; or Hack lies alone, in longing.

This inclusion of domestic, personal details creates the texture of a life lived in body as well as mind, of suffering

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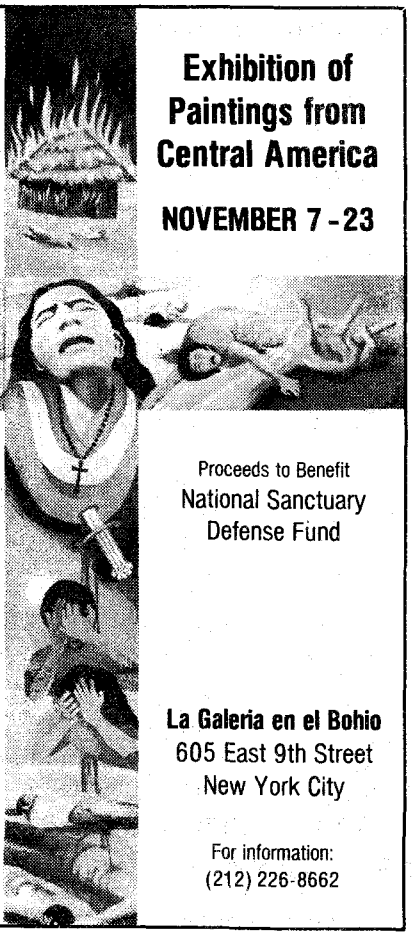

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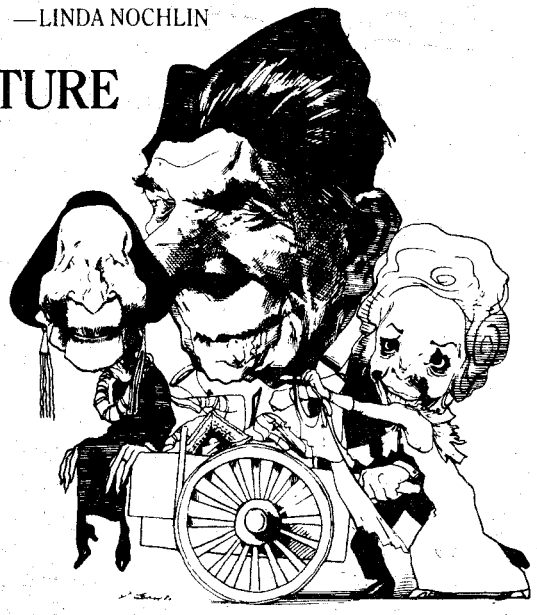

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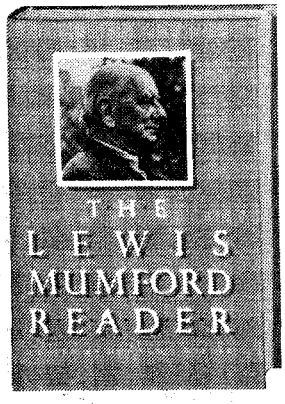

and satisfying appetites sexual and sensuous, in an inclusive world. Love is not a thing apart, a spiritual or romantic quest elevated above the quotidian, but one strand of a diverse, disorderly, mentally and physically rich experience. The poet accepts all of self and all of life; she celebrates living. The characters eat, drink, excrete. They experience love, friendship, betrayal; motherhood and the longing for motherhood; jealousy, estrangement, loneliness; the seasons and their natural manifestations. They are acquainted with what is disgusting, foolish, childish, erotic, maternal, joyous, serene, painful—with everything real. Like Hopkins, Hacker praises "All things counter, original, spare, strange;/Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)/With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim." But, unlike Hopkins, she does it without excluding any part of life.

Hacker uses a loose sonnet form, varying the rhyme scheme of the sestet considerably. There are sets of linked sonnets, the last line of one being picked up, sometimes with variation, as the first line of the next. Her rhythms are often jerky, mixing four-stress lines and unscannable lines with iambic pentameter. They are not graceful, lyrical, but are often strong. Strength, indeed, is necessary to make up for the lack of music. A couple of the sonnets are formed with two (separated) half-lines; a few expanded villanelles are included. Some of the poems are addressed to friends, as letters. There are allusions to a wide range of literary sources, but especially to Shakespeare, and first lines that echo his, like, "From you I will be absent as the spring/turns into summer."

Some of the sonnets end weakly (can we refer this too to Shakespeare, whose concluding couplets often seem perfunctory?):

> I'll take books to the park—it
> *is* a fine day. I miss you very much.
>
> . . .
>
> We do it once like ladies, once like tramps.
> We love each other very very much.

Sometimes the conceits seem forced:

> (It's either that or lie awake and stew more.)
> (I wish that there were only beef to stew.)

And sometimes the rhyme, as in "Tack-/y," or "disdain-/ing." There are a few lines in which the sense is opaque.

But these are minor problems. A

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more serious problem is the emotional range of the poems. Although they contain a great variety of experiences, suggesting that the poet censors nothing, refuses to treat any part of living as illegitimate, Hacker does seem to censor her emotional expression: she never permits herself to express anger. This would not matter if there were not situations in the narrative that call for anger, poems in which anger hangs faintly, distantly, like an echo in a room where music played hours before, or the backcloth for a play so often performed, so familiar, that the reporter feels the scene does not need to be described. One misses it. Hacker is aware of this lack, aware that "Grown-ups, at least, will not rush to applaud. They/won't believe you." Still, she insists she feels only loss and sorrow.

Altogether, though, *Love, Death, and the Changing of the Seasons* is deeply satisfying. It allows the reader, in the concentrated and vivid way only poetry provides, to be immersed in the texture of one woman's actuality. And so detailed is that texture that the life stands, regardless of the outcome of the love affair. Unlike any other love poems I know, Hacker's sequence provides a context that offers a tacit explanation of how one can go on when the heart is shattered. □

River Deep-Mountain High

MARGO JEFFERSON

I, TINA. *By Tina Turner, with Kurt Loder. William Morrow. 236 pp. $16.95.*

Q. You've come a long way in life, Tina. You must feel very satisfied in how you've pulled yourself together in the last ten years since leaving Ike.
A. I don't have one debt at the moment. I have a home now. I always wanted a home, but I didn't have one because my parents broke up. . . . I'm reliving something I wanted when I was a child. The principal's daughters had homes, and now I have a home. . . .

I'm self-made. I always wanted to make myself a better person, because I was not educated. But that was my dream—to have class. Now it's too late for that. You can't read a book like my autobiography and say, "She's classy." You can say, "She's a respectable woman," but you can't say "classy." My role model was always Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Now you're talking about high stuff, right? . . . Of course, you're talking about a farm girl who stood in the fields, dreaming, years ago, wishing she was that kind of person. But if I had been that kind of person, do you think I could sing with the emotions I do? . . . That's the class I wanted to be. But I wasn't, so I dealt with the class I was in. I have never disrespected myself, and I'm still very proud of myself. But society doesn't look at that as class, that type of woman. Society respects me, I think, because I'm self-made and I climbed to the top. But it was the high-class black people I wanted respect from. So I never let go of that dream.

. . .

Q. Are you surprised by the way your life has turned out?
A. No. I'm not surprised, because I've always wanted this. And I won't stop until I get that respect. I may not ever get it completely, because my life has been too hard so far. . . . I may not be able to get that class, because I didn't act my life, I lived it. I am Tina Turner. I am raunchy. But I know I'm a lady and that deep inside me there's a craving for class. I know I'm accepted, but what I always wanted was the principal's daughters' world. And maybe that was my lesson in life. . . . Maybe I had to learn something from wanting that and then not being able to have it. Instead, in this lifetime, I came back, so to speak, a slave girl.

I have taken this excerpt from the October 23 issue of *Rolling Stone*, which features an interview with Tina Turner timed to coincide with the appearance of her autobiography, *I, Tina*, and her new record, *Break Every Rule*. The interview interests me because I find frankness about social fantasies more absorbing and much more rare than frankness about sexual ones. Then, too, her words, which are sentimental, shrewd, naïve and pragmatic, join the outsider's romance of triumph through survival with the *arriviste*'s romance of victory through status. Poor Tina, I thought, stuck in the backwoods dreaming about Washington ladies with dollhouse voices. But this is America and this is rock-and-roll. If a businessman's son can fantasize about being a sharecropper, why

Margo Jefferson is a critic based in New York City.

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shouldn't a farmer's daughter dream of being a President's wife? And given Ike Turner, Jack Kennedy and Aristotle Onassis—all arrogant, temperamentally coarse men who liked bullying and whore-mongering—the women have more in common than meets the eye. Many rock stars rose to prominence by mixing their actual origins with their fantasized ones, which probably explains why rock-and-roll's bourgeois audience has so often celebrated the mythic voyage into downward mobility. Upward mobility, on the other hand, tends to be seen as a regrettable weakness among performers lucky enough to have begun life on the lower rungs of society's ladder. But in the mongrel world of rock-and-roll, one impulse need not be considered aesthetically, commercially or even politically purer than the other.

Let's return to Tina's notion of herself as a slave girl in this life. (In past lives, she believes she was given a better deal.) She was born Anna Mae Bullock in 1939 in Nut Bush, Tennessee, the second, and unwanted, daughter of a farm overseer and his angry, unhappy wife. Her mother, Zelma, whom she adored with a largely unrequited passion ("I watched her hands, her feet, the way she smoothed her hair. I knew her toenails, and how her toes curved. And her smell: I always went to her chair when she left it so I could smell her aroma. . . . I knew every darned thing about her"), left for St. Louis when Anna Mae was ten. Her father, Richard, left three years later.

Anna Mae spent large portions of her childhood and adolescence with her strict Baptist grandparents—yes, she sang in the church choir, but couldn't have cared less that it was God she sang about—with co-workers, with family friends and with relatives, few of whom seemed to love her very much. She latched on to role models with ferocious determination. At that point in her life they included a family of black beauticians ("They didn't work in the fields or any of that. . . . And that was when I really started to realize that there was another way of living") and a white couple for whom she cleaned ("I was learning about this other world—the white world, I guess—with magazines and books and culture").

She became an All-American jock in high school. She played basketball, she was a cheerleader, she ran track and if there'd been football for girls she'd have played that too. (In photographs she looks like a candidate for the Tennessee Tiger Belles.) She fell in love with the basketball star of Carver High School, a member of the black-bourgeoisie clique that wore tight-legged jeans, white shirts and liked to do a little light slumming at ghetto bars. But Harry married another girl, and when Anna Mae's grandmother died, her mother went to the funeral and asked her to come live with her in St. Louis. "And so I decided to go. I felt I had outlived Tennessee."

Anna Mae enrolled in Sumner High School: "All black but very high-class—these were the children of doctors, professional people. And here I was, fresh from the country. My mother was basically a maid, and the man she was living with . . . he was a truck driver. . . . So in this new school I was still feeling sort of lower class."

She had come to associate hot sex and cold religious propriety with the working-class blacks she lived among, familial affection and romantic love with the middle-class whites she worked for, and stylish respectability with the middle-class blacks she went to school with. But her private dreams had to do with the glamour of show business, with piano playing, with singing, with being noticed. So, in 1955, the 16-year-old began going to the nightclubs with her waitress-sister Alline:

> She worked for Leroy Tyus, an upper-class black man. He had some dealings with the government, I think, and he drove a Cadillac and had a white wife, and he had this bar, the Tail of the Cock. It was a very high-class place; the biggest people in town went there, and they tipped big too. Alline made good money there. And when she went out on dates, there was always a Cadillac or a big Lincoln picking her up.
>
> Well, on weeknights after work Alline had the dates. But on weekends, she and her girlfriends would get together and they would go to see Ike Turner, first at the Club D'Lisa, and then, after hours, from about two A.M. on, at the Club Manhattan, across the river in East St. Louis. None of the doctors and things that Alline was dating would go to places like that. . . . So Alline would go with the girlfriends. Because Ike Turner and the Kings of Rhythm were what was happening—in St. Louis, they were as big as the Beatles would be later on. But they had a pretty rough reputation.

Indeed they had, and Izear Luster

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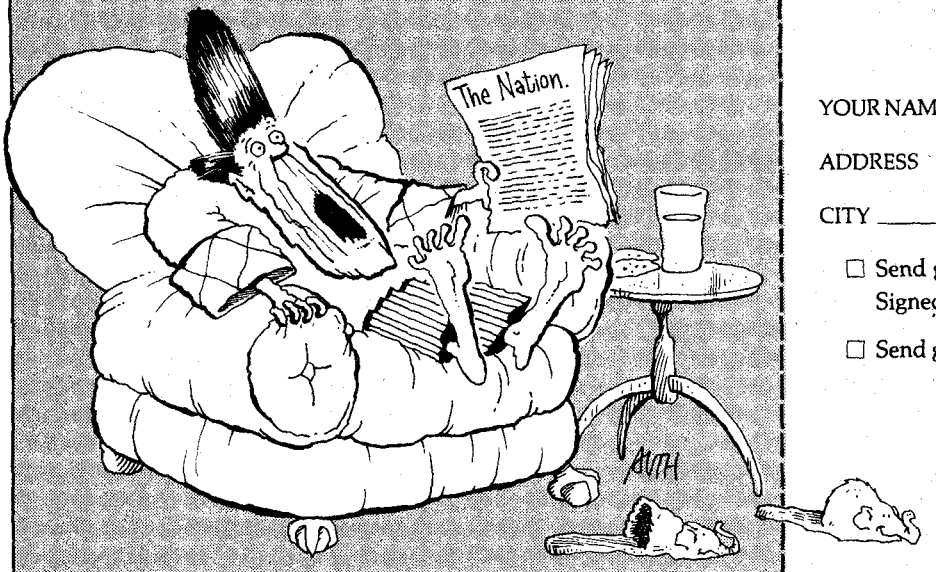

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Turner, their leader, is the unregenerate villain of this story. (I have nothing to apologize for, he was heard to say recently on TV—those times I beat her, held her and poured oil down her throat, they made her the star you all love today.) Unregenerate yes, but not unworthy of attention. As a villain he seems to conform to the stereotype of the big-city pimp, but his ties to the sort of small-town sadist played by Dennis Hopper in *Blue Velvet* are just as strong, and his role models are probably Jim Brown and Frank Sinatra, for after all, they abuse and mistreat women by the score, and nobody ever tells them *they* lack class.

Ike was born in 1931 in Clarksdale, Mississippi, to a seamstress and a philandering Baptist minister whose conquests included the girlfriend of a local white thug named Bird Doggin'. Bird Doggin' arrived at the family's home one day where, accompanied by friends, he took the Reverend Turner into the backyard and kicked holes in his stomach. "I remember it like it was yesterday," says Ike. "That door bustin' open, and Mama tryin' to hold on to Daddy and to me, too, and them pushin' her to the floor. For a kid in his mother's arms, it was a long way to fall, you know?" A very long way, and this chilling sentence becomes chillingly sentimental in the context of the numerous women Ike would abuse for most of his adult life.

Ike grew up playing piano and hanging around the local radio station. By the time he was 17 he had his own group, and three years later the band met B.B. King, who heard their versions of jukebox hits by Roy Brown and Amos Milburn and took them to Memphis to meet the producer Sam Phillips. The result was "Rocket 88" of 1951, which Phillips would later claim was the first rock-and-roll record. ("Then I said, 'Ike, now I want some damn piano.' And he got up here: *dooda-dooda-doo-doot*—this was before Jerry Lee Lewis, man. And I heard them damn saxophones, and I said, 'Damn, that's good.'") But Phillips also insisted that Ike was no singer. And indeed, he seems not to be. He can sound like those men who do low-voiced comic turns on Coasters or Statler Brothers records; he can sound like a street-corner backup singer; he can even sound like Sonny Bono, but he cannot sound like a compelling soloist.

So Ike took to the road as a talent scout for producer Joe Bihari, recording and sometimes playing with Elmore James, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Howlin' Wolf and B.B. King. But he wanted a band of his own—a feeling strengthened, no doubt, by his getting $20 and no songwriting credit out of "Rocket 88"— and, after switching from piano to guitar, he was able to keep one together. In 1954 the Kings of Rhythm moved to East St. Louis and became the toast of black and white clubs, playing blues, pop and anything in between.

When Anna Mae first saw him at the Club Manhattan:

> the place was filled with women. Tons of girls, black and white—and that wasn't really allowed then, you know, the white ones being there. But they came anyway. As I later found out, Ike's band mostly drew women, hardly any men—when men came, they were usually looking for their women. . . . I was sitting there, a little bored, because this wasn't really my cup of tea, you know? Or at least I didn't think it was. Then Ike walked in the room and you could feel it, somehow. He had the body then that David Bowie has now. . . . His suit looked like it was hanging on a hanger. He

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walked through the room, and everybody was going, "Hey Ike, hey, man," and I thought: "What an immaculate-looking black man." He wasn't my type though. . . . Then he got up onstage and picked up his guitar. He hit one note, and I thought: "Jesus, listen to this guy play." . . . The floor was packed with people dancing and sweating to this great music, and I was just sitting there, amazed, staring at Ike Turner. I thought, "God, I wonder why so many women like him? He sure is ugly. But I kept listening and looking. I almost went into a trance just watching him.

Anna Mae wanted to sing, and one night she made her move:

Ike was up onstage by himself, just playing the organ. He stayed up there sometimes between sets to avoid troubles with all his women. . . . Suddenly I realized that I knew the song he was playing. It was "You Know I Love You," the B.B. King tune.

Just about then, the Kings' drummer, who was dating Alline, came over and tried to tease her into singing. Anna Mae took the microphone and started singing instead:

And boy, Ike—that blew him away. He went, *"Giiirrrlll!"* And he stopped playing the organ and ran down off that stage and he picked me right up! . . . And I was in: I started singing with the Kings of Rhythm.

They were ambitious and they needed each other. He didn't sing, dance or mesmerize a crowd; she didn't play an instrument, write songs or run a band. But their idyll was brief:

Ike and I were like brother and sister. He went out and bought me my first stage clothes: sequinned dresses, honey, in pink and silver and blue, with long gloves up to here and rings to wear over them. Bare-back shoes, the stockings with seams, even a fur stole. Boy I was sharp! Got me a gold tooth, too. . . .

I was riding around in Ike's pink Fleetwood, with the fish fins and all, sitting right next to him and whichever girlfriend he had along, wearing my first form-fitting dresses, and a padded bra, and long earrings—I tell you, I felt like I was rich! And it felt good! We would pull up at the club, and I would get out and walk in and sit there real grand, like I was a star. And after a while, Ike would call me onstage. He'd say, "Now we're gonna bring Little Ann up." And I'd walk up there and sing my three songs, and everybody would clap. It was wonderful. They were clapping for me. Little Ann.

Soon afterward, Little Ann became pregnant by Raymond Hill, the band's saxophone player and, in addition to singing, she got a job as a nurse's assistant. She moved with her son into Ike's house—dubbed the House of Many Thrills for the number of women he and his musicians brought there—and one night it began.

Yes, I fell in love. Became addicted to it, you might say. . . . I would have been lost in my life at that point without him. I mean, I could do two things: work in a hospital or sing with Ike's band. I didn't know anything else. Or anybody else. And I wanted to sing.

In 1960 they had their first nationwide hit, "A Fool in Love." Little Ann was pregnant again—by Ike this time, who had gone back to his previous girlfriend. She had also been rechristened Tina, in homage to those white jungle goddesses Nyoka and Sheena Ike had seen in the movies. Tina was his ticket out of East St. Louis, and she got her first beating when she told him she

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didn't want to move to California with him. (It was followed by sex, a routine he adhered to through the years.) She was in the hospital with hepatitis when the record began climbing the charts, "and boy, I got to hate that goddamn song. I'd have to lie there, all sick and swollen up, and listen to 'A Fool in Love' every day." But not for long. Ike had booked the group on a whirlwind tour, and she was ordered to sneak out of the hospital ahead of her release time.

And off they went, Ike, Tina, the band and the Ikettes, on what would be sixteen years of touring, 365 days a year, sometimes seven shows a night. Black clubs, white clubs, colleges, theaters, England, France, Las Vegas, opening for the Rolling Stones, entr'acte for Dick Cavett and Johnny Carson. "Think It's Gonna Work Out Fine," "I Idolize You," "River Deep–Mountain High," "Proud Mary," "Come Together," "Honky Tonk Woman," "I've Been Loving You Too Long," "I Want to Take You Higher," "Nutbush City Limits." R&B rock-and-roll, soul rock-and-roll, girl-group rock-and-roll, white rock-and-roll, mulatto rock-and-roll. Ike, at the back of the stage, impassive and menacing, wearing an Afro wig one night, a Native American wig with headband the next, dressing in black bodysuits, white minks, hot pants and boots. The Ikettes, in minidresses and bangs, boogieing their way into oblivion. And Tina, with her pugilist's stance and her go-go dancer's legs, her voice—"I know that I don't have a 'pretty' voice. My voice is not the voice of a woman, so to speak. . . . When I first started working with Ike, it was all men and just me, and I sort of had to keep up" —and her inimitable "let's have a pep rally while we're watching a dirty movie" manner.

As the years went by, it became clear that those women in the audience night after night were there for Tina; it was her they wanted to dance and sing like, her they screamed for and idolized. And if she had once longed for the life of the principals' daughters, now the principals', doctors', lawyers' and businessmen's daughters who crowded clubs and theaters wanted her life. Or, remembering her distinction, let's say that they wanted to act, not to live, her life. For as she sang in Ike's song, "This Man's Crazy": "Un hunh, a lot of people see, but very few know/What happens to this man behind closed doors."

What was happening behind closed doors was the basic beat-up:

> Ike: What's on your fuckin' mind?
> Tina: Nothing, Ike.
> Ike: Yes it is. You're just tryin' to fuck with me.
> And finally—*bam! Bam!* And then *whomp! Pow!* And then the shoe would come off. . . and there I was. And then he would be fine, as if nothing had ever happened. And later I'd be onstage *thryin'* to *thing* through these cut and swollen lips.

There were variations of course—a lit cigarette up her nose, for instance, or clothes hangers and telephones instead of shoes and shoe trees. And through it all, Ike was busy inscribing their relationship onto a series of songs and phrases: "Such a Fool for You"; "Young and Dumb"; "You hurt me so much/I worry and cry/And I can't seem to please you/Still I try"; "You know it's love cuz it hurts so bad"; "Baby, Baby PLEEEZ."

Tina calls that life a horror show with no intermissions, and that's how it reads. It's a Funky Street Bluebeard's Castle, which neither Tina nor Ike's assorted mistresses and business managers could contrive to leave. Here is Rhonda Gramm, Ike's road manager and mistress: "You either did it or you got hit. . . . You wanted to get out, but you were afraid to." Here is Ann Cain, another road manager and mistress: "He had this acoustic guitar with him, and he got me cornered in the bathroom and started swinging it at me, hitting me with it. I had my arms up, trying to protect my head, and he finally broke the back of the guitar on my elbow. Then he *really* got mad." And here is Tina on Rhonda, Ann and others:

> All his girlfriends became my friends. Because they were always in the same position I had been in: falling in love with Ike Turner. . . . So we all had a lot in common. And who else did I have? There was no life outside of the house and the studio and the road. I couldn't even go to a movie on my own.

What was going on here? You are baffled and enraged as you read, because she is depressed, then suicidal, then she begins to hate Ike, but *she will not leave.* Bluebeard's wives felt they had no other fate; Tina and company must have felt the same. She seems to have been in thrall to guilt ("I knew the story of how he had tried to get his career going for so long, and how every

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time he'd get a foothold, people would walk out on him. And I swore I would not do that to him"), to ambition, without any vision of what she might do on her own, and to a hopelessness undoubtedly set in motion when the parents she felt had never loved her finally deserted her. But let us not underestimate Ike's use of terror, or his twisted charisma. Ann Cain gives some insight into the tie between his hatred of women and his dependence on them:

> He always surrounded himself with *women*. They were always the go-betweens, so that nobody could get to him businesswise. Ike always spoke through someone else. The man was a genius, but he felt that people laughed at him because he wasn't educated and didn't know how to structure words and sentences. So he had us.

Small wonder that Ike told *Spin* last summer, "I made mistakes. I dealt with Tina physically instead of mentally. It's very hard to deal with black women mentally. It's like you have to put some fear in them to communicate."

As for Tina, she finally left Ike in 1976 and, after eight years of Vegas-style club and cabaret dates, worked her way into pop and rock divadom. She looks wonderful, she gives winning interviews and she sings with the same combination of predictability and irresistibility she always did. Pop stardom has brought her into the world of female-celebrity role models inhabited by Jane Fonda, Joan Collins and Barbra Streisand. All, like her, are women of "a certain age." Rock stardom has also brought her into the old-boy network inhabited by Mick Jagger, David Bowie and Paul McCartney. All, like her, veterans of the climb through little clubs, big clubs, TV shows, movies and fashion magazines, old R&B, soul music and white rock.

Goldmine magazine longs for the days when she was "just the most energetic, sexiest rock 'n soul woman around, and not an MOR icon with a frizzed-out bronze do." But most of the rock-and-roll performers who came of age in the 1950s and 1960s are middle-of-the-road these days, and Tina was always an icon with some do or another. I haven't liked her insistence on being called a rock singer, not an R&B one: aside from the evidence of her voice, aside from the fact that there's scarcely a song on either *Private Dancer* or *Break Every Rule* without an R&B, soul or black-pop twist, all the rock stars she currently associates with sing—or at least dabble in—R&B rock. I haven't liked it and I want her to stop saying it, but I think I understand it. The R&B Tina wants to get away from is the R&B of Ike Turner and his world, on and off the stage. It's the R&B of second-class stardom. Rock means nonghetto, and at this point, nonghetto to Tina means independence: after all, Phil Spector's "River Deep–Mountain High" was the first song she was ever invited to sing on her own, while "Come Together" and "Honky Tonk Woman" were the first songs she insisted that Ike let her perform. (And here's another R&B/white rock/rock-and-roll irony. It's Tina's opinion that Ike should have settled in England, where "he had a lot of white girlfriends, and white guys that idolized his playing." She's probably right, for Ike, who began his career doing cover versions of R&B and moved through his own songs to cover versions of soul and rock, wasn't able to create a hybrid as Jimi Hendrix and Sly Stone did, or spin off a younger generation of funk-

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masters as James Brown did, or move into disco, where he could have been surrounded by hordes of pliant, ambitious girls. He should have renewed ties with his blues confrères, then gone to England, where he could have become a combination mascot and idol for a host of young rockers.)

I don't love Tina's new album. She's said that its writers (most of them were also involved in *Private Dancer*) tailored the songs to her, and I'm sure they tried to. But they seem to have her poised somewhere between a weeper heroine and a Palladium dominatrix. Don't misunderstand, there are elements of each in her persona. But how fresh and strong her voice is in *I, Tina*. On the record, it is filtered through the voices of young men imagining how best to present her. (She's sexy, she's strong, yet she's vulnerable; she's an older woman, yet she's a child at heart.) When Tina first heard Terry Britten's "Show Some Respect" and "What's Love Got to Do With It?" her response was, "They're wimpy." Britten wrote half the songs on *Break Every Rule*, and Tina is right.

Kurt Loder has edited *I, Tina* nicely, letting her narrative take center stage, punctuating it with the voices of friends, colleagues and family. He knows that the story will take care of itself, and his only real mistake lies in providing a frame that strains painfully for social significance: "The woman who would one day be Tina Turner was born Anna Mae Bullock at the tail end of another age. By 1939, tensions in the world, long building, were yielding to turmoil"—whereupon we receive bullets of information about Hitler, Frédéric Joliot-Curie and Albert Einstein.

For the first time in her life Tina Turner can do just about anything she wants. I've always been crazy about her, and now that she's turned down a second invitation to play South Africa, I'd like her to look for better songs and make a better movie than *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*. □

The Small Time

STUART KLAWANS

"They've got it all worked out," said my friend from the big-time publishing house, as we dove relentlessly into our third drink. "The people who read Don DeLillo? There are just 8,000 of us. The marketing guys practically know us by name."

The outlook, of course, is not as grim as late-afternoon boozing made it seem. We were talking only about hardcovers. Sooner or later a DeLillo or a Gaddis appears in a trade paperback edition, which might sell another 30,000 copies. That's how big houses can go on publishing not-quite-profitable books: they make money on the reprint rights. And that's also how big houses differ from small presses. A small press might run 500 copies of a book to start, which is not that much less than a big house's first run of 8,000. (James Michener gets his printings in multiples of 100,000, but that's a whole different level of reality.) The problem with small presses is that they also stop at 500. The big-press book might not reach that many more people initially, but it's allowed to go on reaching people long after the small-press book has had O.P. chiseled on its headstone.

For small publishers to keep their books in print, they must have both a remarkable loyalty to their writers and a Zen master's inability to imagine doing anything other than what they've been doing. These two qualities stand out in Jim Haining, the proprietor of Salt Lick Press, a man of gentle manners and Gibraltar-like steadfastness. (Salt Lick Press, 1804 East 38½ Street, Austin, Texas 78722.) Haining began Salt Lick in 1969, as a student at Quincy College in Illinois, and is still running it today from his home in Austin, Texas. After seventeen years in the business he has become dedicated not only to publishing new work but also to keeping work in print. "My guess is that fewer than 1 percent of small-press titles are ever reprinted," he says. Over the next eighteen months, Haining plans to change that statistic by getting his entire list back into print. "Reaganomics has shredded what monies had been available for the small presses, but I will find a way," he says. "It's just that we aren't on the same time standard."

First on his list to be reprinted are the Salt Lick Samplers, beautifully printed pamphlets that are about five inches tall, a perfect size for your breast pock-

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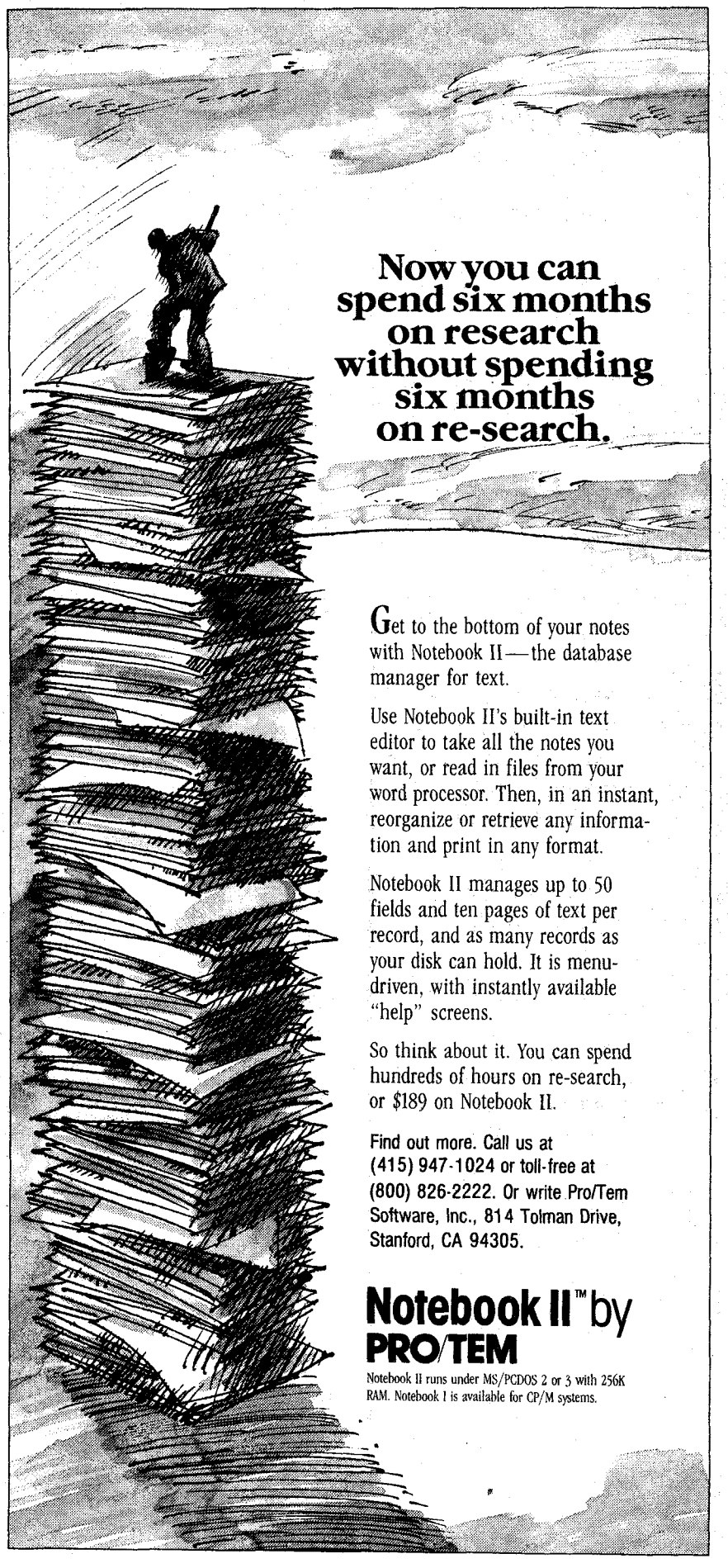
et. Haining uses the Samplers to excerpt his authors' work and to introduce new writing. "If I was of independent means," he says, "I would print these in large quantities, say 50,000 runs, send them to friends everywhere and ask them to distribute them to their friends and the public. Think of the religious tracts you've found in public places, bus stops, stores. What better way to put new work into the culture?"

Salt Lick also puts out full-size publications, which Haining calls Lucky Heart books. They are as lovingly printed and illustrated as the Samplers and have suffered from the same skimpy press runs of 500. Haining might now try a run of 1,000 for the second edition of Salt Lick's all-time best seller, *Catch My Breath*, by Michael Lally. *Catch My Breath* was Haining's only book to sell out its initial run immediately. "*Booklist* got hold of it, and gave it a good review," Haining explains. "Orders started coming in from libraries all over." That was in 1978; Haining wanted to reprint the book right away but couldn't manage it. It's now at the top of his reprint list.

In his spare time, Haining also keeps up a magazine called *Salt Lick*, the publication that got him started. *Salt Lick* is a center-stapled, 8½-inch by 11-inch mélange of poetry, mailed art, extracts from forthcoming Lucky Heart books, occasional commentaries (such as John Ahern on his new translation of the *Paradiso*, or Gerald Burns on sketching topless dancers), and a useful list of other small presses. *Salt Lick* also features the small-press equivalent of the prize in a box of Cracker Jack. One may find in it an envelope containing an Abstract Expressionist jigsaw puzzle or a Chinese paper cutting or a tipped-in news photograph of Gerald Ford. These little touches make *Salt Lick* "a poor man's limited edition," Haining says. "It's printed in black ink on standard size cheap paper, but there's always hand work"—the tip-ins, for example, or hand-colored illustrations. Haining prints 1,500 copies of the magazine and expects them to last a couple of years. He tries to do the hand work right away for 500, so he can begin distribution, then puts the finishing touches on more copies as the need arises. The last issue of *Salt Lick* came out in 1982; Haining hopes to publish a new one by the end of the year.

"The press has been the best teacher I've ever had," he says, with the satis-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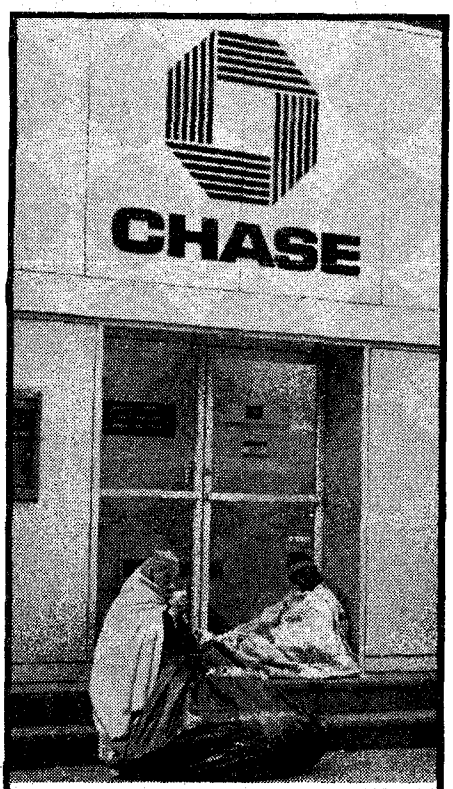

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faction that comes to a man when he's devoted fully half his time for the last seventeen years to a concern that hasn't earned a penny. Haining began *Salt Lick* with two fellow students who quickly dropped out of the project. By 1971 the imprint was his alone. He moved the press to Baltimore when he became a student there at the Antioch College extension, then moved it once again to Quincy, Illinois, where he stayed for ten years. Quincy is a beautiful, prosperous town, just up the Mississippi from Hannibal, Missouri. Residence there affords Haining the possibility of funding from the Illinois Arts Council—generous, he says—and a peaceful life with poet Michalea Moore, his wife and sometime helper in Salt Lick. The town also offered him a vocation: he started to work in a print shop in Quincy to pay off some debts from the magazine. Thus, having set out to be a publisher, Haining became a printer.

In the winter of 1982, Haining and Moore relocated from Quincy to Texas, to be closer to Haining's family. They accomplished the move with a fair degree of nonchalance, considering that Moore was pregnant, Haining was jobless and they had a house in Quincy they couldn't sell. They settled in Austin "because we got to it on the highway before San Antonio," and Haining eventually found work as the graphics manager for a high-technology company. Recently, he took a new job at what he describes as "one of the better print shops in the Southwest," where he intends to get what he calls a Ph.D. in lithography. "They have big, beautiful Heidelberg presses," he says.

The move to Texas was costly for Salt Lick. State funding for small presses is less generous in Texas than in Illinois, so Haining needed more support than ever from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. Yet to qualify for such funding, publishers must have brought out two titles in the last two years, and Salt Lick had been inactive since the move to Austin. The effort to start up again therefore involved building up the Salt Lick Foundation, which Haining incorporated in 1978. "We'll never sell enough books to support ourselves," he says. "And it's hard to get funding if you don't have an apparatus set up for you."

Much of this tale can be extracted from Haining's own Lucky Heart book *A Quincy History*, which consists of his edited journal entries and selected poems written between January 1972 and May 1979. Not the least of the book's attractions lies in its details about running a small press; not the least of its tensions comes from Haining's notes on working with his authors. The writers to whom he has been most loyal, besides Michalea Moore, are Robert Trammell, Michael Lally, David Searcy and, above all, Gerald Burns, who has occasionally set type for Haining and seems to be the Ezra Pound of the Salt Lick crowd—their teacher, cheerleader and Village Explainer. Out of twenty-one Salt Lick titles, five are by Burns and four by Trammell. Trammell's work is characterized by Haining as "Texas Zen." His typical performance describes how he's been drinking all night in a roadhouse and now is either going to kill his baby or be killed by her, so he'd better take time from his busy schedule to write a three-line poem. If you'd like a taste of Trammell, you might try his recent Sampler, *The Last Time I Saw Her*. He is the sort of poet who is well suited to sampling, and this particular collection seems to me to show off his strengths. If you're interested in Burns, though, you'd best plunge in and read him in depth. Burns is the classically trained type. In fact, he's so hieratic, he makes Ashbery sound like the Fat Boys. I would recommend as a starting point his long sequence *Boccherini's Minuet*, published in the Lucky Heart book of the same name. For lack of a more adequate description, I'll call the poem a kind of *Praise of Folly*, which reels from Sir Thomas Browne to Boris Karloff movies to anything else Burns has ever read or seen.

My own Salt Lick favorites—and I apologize to Haining, Burns and Trammell for this difference of opinion—are two prose writers, John Dennis Brown and Dave Zielinski. Brown writes about living in old houses in New England: camping out in them, rebuilding them, tearing them down and using the lumber to put up new buildings. His Lucky Heart book, *Two Kids & The Three Bears*, is about a winter he spent in an unheated old farmhouse with his new wife and a couple of goats. His Salt Lick Sampler, *The Bleys' Barn*, is even better. It tells about how he and his brother worked at razing an old barn. In order to tear it down, though, they had to figure out how it had been put up; and the more Brown understood of

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it, the more awestruck he felt at the cunning and toughness of the colonial Yankee farmer who'd built the place. By the time Brown is finished with the story, you can all but smell the beams.

Zielinski, the author of a Sampler titled *Happy Hour*, is by all evidence a novelist. The Sampler offers the first two chapters of a story narrated by a tongue-tied, sexually backward Vietnam veteran who played minor-league baseball for a while and now spends his time in his apartment in San Diego, trying to send sex thoughts to his downstairs neighbor, LaWanda Hernandez, by attaching his TV antenna to his penis. His main concerns, besides LaWanda, are monster movies, the shooting of the Pope and the possibility of having sex in an airplane. I have no idea where Zielinski proposes to take this character, but I know I will rush to buy the Salt Lick Sampler with the next chapters.

As for Haining himself, he intends to bring out a book of his own this fall, a set of poems inspired by the illustrations in a 1932 edition of *A Child's Garden of Verse*. He has negotiated with the original publisher for the right to reprint the illustrations and has received permission—for one printing. Just when he's about to reprint his other authors, Haining faces a brand-new obstacle to keeping his own work in print.

Haining's response to the new difficulty is relaxed and in keeping with the Salt Lick emblem, an illustration of a beehive, capped by the motto *Busy All the Time*. Haining found the image on a postcard, recycled it and has used it ever since, even though the beehive image has led some people to think he's based in Utah and therefore publishes Mormon tracts. The real significance of the emblem, he says, is that "if you do a little every day, you'll eventually get the job done. Busy all the time." □

All Fall Down

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

THE RECKONING. *By David Halberstam. William Morrow. 740 pp. $19.95.*

In 1986, American well-being, such as it is, depends increasingly on the policies of Japanese industrialists, investors and their Ministry of International Trade and Industry. If, as Ronald Reagan fatuously reiterates, America is again standing tall, it is because the Japanese are propping us up. As the decline in the value of the dollar and the corresponding appreciation of the yen in the past year disconcertingly reveal, our national love affair with Japanese cars, VCRs, color TVs, earth-moving machines, steel and computer chips, indeed with almost anything Japan Inc. ships us, does not stem from currency maladjustments and underpriced merchandise. We admire Japanese workmanship, quality, styling and service.

That's the problem for our corporations and unions. The corresponding difficulty for the Japanese is what to do with their $60 billion excess from exports to the United States. Their decision, like OPEC's in its palmy days, has been to invest the loot in America. The Japanese have been acquiring an increasing portion of our national debt, more and more U.S. real estate and substantial portfolios of corporate stocks and bonds. Now they have begun to buy into investment banking, a dubious industry still dominated by Wall Street. They have responded to the swelling of protectionist sentiment by placing "voluntary" quotas on auto exports and, more recently, by direct investment in auto production here. Honda and Nissan already operate U.S. factories. Mazda and Toyota plan to join them. Even the "American" vehicles hawked by Lee Iacocca and his faceless opposite numbers at Ford and G.M. are collections of parts imported from Japan or Mexico or Brazil. How the mighty have fallen since the days when Henry Ford 2d rejected the installation of imported components in his cars on the ostensible ground that what was good enough for his granddaddy was good enough for him and Detroit.

Using the fate of the U.S. automobile industry as a horrible example, and focusing his chronicle on Ford and Nissan, David Halberstam essays a broad interpretation of U.S. decline and Japanese ascent. As in his earlier books on Vietnam and the U.S. media, he has

Robert Lekachman is an economist and the author of Greed Is Not Enough: Reaganomics *(Pantheon), among other books.*

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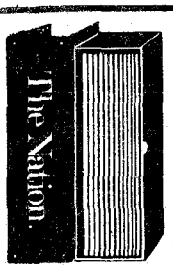

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interviewed platoons of participants, observers, union leaders, government officials and critics. There are appealing character sketches, particularly of unfamiliar Japanese figures, among them Kawamata, the head of Nissan when it broke into the American market; Shioji and Masuda, rival union leaders at Nissan; and Katayama, who headed Nissan's U.S. operation. The Americans are a more familiar lot, except for Ford's J. Edward Lundy, the financial controller who repeatedly thwarted the recommendations of talented engineers for investment in advanced technology, and a few of the engineers who vainly sought to improve the product.

Halberstam unloads more than enough raw material for an excellent book. Unfortunately, the text is repetitive, casually edited and stuffed with far too many well-known anecdotes. Anyone with a passing interest in car lore has heard how Henry Ford nearly wrecked his own company, destroyed his humane son Edsel and left Henry Ford 2d with a terminally ill enterprise. The details of the epic struggle between Lee Iacocca and Henry 2d are available in Lee's *apologia pro sua vita* as well as in Robert Lacey's more balanced version in his current best seller, *Ford*. Neither character recalls Hector or Achilles, although the temptation is powerful to play on the word "heel." We have also heard before about the venerable prophet of statistical quality control, Edwards Deming, ignored at home and worshiped in Japan. Even the *Harvard Business Review* criticizes the short-run perspective of our overpaid business leaders and deplores their fixation on quarterly earnings and closing stock-market prices. By now we are aware that the Japanese patiently enlarge market share, confident that in its wake, profits will soar. Their banks, their politicians and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry planners concur on this strategy. We know too that Japanese workers and executives are loyal to their companies in a highly un-American fashion. And so on.

The pity is that Halberstam has missed the real story lurking in his text. It lies in the contrasting responses of two dominant business establishments to their labor forces. The key event for Nissan and its Japanese rivals was the bitter 1953 strike which featured a ferocious contest for worker loyalties between the radical Masuda and the moderate Shioji. Halberstam tells this story well. If Masuda had won, Japanese collective bargaining might well have replicated the U.S. model of industrywide union organization and adversarial negotiation, punctuated by occasional strikes. Shioji took the line that only the success of Nissan offered the promise of improved wages and benefits, and his triumph set the pattern for union negotiation at other major Japanese corporations. Within that context, quality circles, company loyalty, lifetime job guarantees for faithful performers, extensive welfare benefits and comparatively narrow salary differentials between assembly-line workers and managers have guaranteed labor peace and wide managerial discretion over job definition, the introduction of new technology and the pace of work.

In his apparent admiration for a set of social arrangements that are unpleasantly reminiscent of old-fashioned U.S. company towns, Halberstam devotes scant space to Japanese sexism; to abundant evidence that younger workers resent centering their lives on Sony, Honda or Nissan; to intimations that participation in the celebrated quality circles is coerced; and to the issue of early compulsory retirement on scant benefits.

U.S. industry leaders confronted a tougher union, the United Automobile Workers, and Walter Reuther was far more astute than the complacent corporate types he customarily outmaneuvered. He could and did play companies against one another, the better to extract more lucrative contract settlements. In its glory days, the U.A.W. advanced its members to the middle class, limited the arbitrary powers of foremen and other supervisors and promoted a generous social agenda nationally. Nevertheless, G.M., Ford and Chrysler were clearly the senior partners in the relationship. On the central issue of work-place control, management still dominated. Reuther, a socialist in his youth and a progressive Democrat in his maturity, could do no more than mitigate hierarchical structures, and he exerted almost no influence on car design and investment policies.

The Big Three paid cash for the privilege of almost uninterrupted production of ever larger, ever shoddier, ever more profitable vehicles. They muffed their opportunity to win worker loyalty and continued to regard employees as interchangeable parts. Let them

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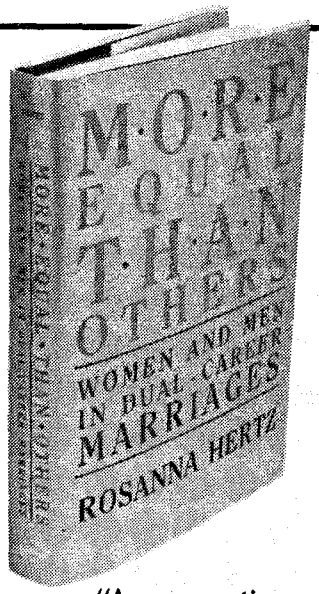

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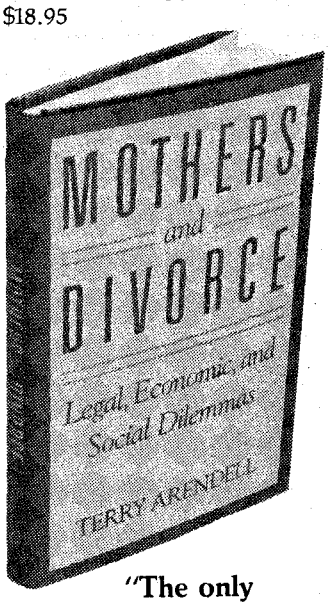

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do exactly as they were told. The bored, resentful assembly-line slaves quite naturally paid as little attention as they could to the endless series of car bodies flowing past them; they varied their deadening routine with alcohol, drugs and occasional sabotage, and absented themselves as often as they could afford to. Since wise consumers traded their chariots for newer models every three years, why bother with fit, finish and trim. When asked why he worked only four days most weeks, one skilled machinist replied that he couldn't make enough to live on in three days. The Japanese made company men out of their human raw material. Their U.S. colleagues erroneously concluded that money was enough to satisfy their employees. By the 1970s, they found themselves paying discontented workers high wages and generous medical benefits for indifferent performance. Treat people like ciphers and they tend to be ungrateful.

The moral is not that Japanese workers are superior to U.S. workers. It is that U.S. capitalists are a poor lot whose greed, ignorance and contempt for their employees has resulted in Halberstam's reckoning. Too bad that in writing his book, Halberstam followed the wasteful example of the American auto industry in the 1950s rather than the lean, economical Nissan alternative. □

Border Country

RUSSELL BANKS

THE BEET QUEEN. *By Louise Erdrich. Henry Holt and Company. 338 pp. $16.95.*

The Beet Queen is a Dickensian story, an angry comedy about abandonment and survival, pluck and luck (ambition and coincidence), common sense and pretension, and wise children and foolish adults. The book is structured in an almost classical manner. It opens with a sudden, unpredictable disaster that tosses an ordered world into terrible disarray. It then follows the paths of the half-dozen affected lives through three generations of small triumphs and reversals, long digressions and quick returns, until at last, in a ceremonial event that reunites and reorders the scattered elements of the tale into symmetrical, benign relations, it circles back to where it began, with everything the same only different—which in classical comedy, as in Dickens, is almost always the point. It's a form that in the hands of lesser artists than Louise Erdrich often affirms the status quo and lends itself to sentimentality. When, however, the story is played against a view of history in which decent folks are victimized not by their dopey and amusing gullibility but by economic and social forces too powerful to overcome with wile or guile, then the story has a divine rage, and one sees the radical power of the old form renewed.

The story of *The Beet Queen* is the story of the entwined fates of three generations of women whose men orbit around them like distant planets, necessary to the system as a whole but taking all their heat and most of their momentum from the women at the center. The book is divided into sixteen chapters narrated by the main characters and covering four decades in the lives of Mary Adare, one of the most memorable women in recent American fiction; her beleaguered mother, Adelaide; her narcissistic cousin, Sita Kozka; her lifelong friend, the half-Chippewa Celestine James; and Celestine's daughter, Dot. There are three men of note—Mary's older brother Karl, who fathers Dot; Dot's godfather, Wallace Pfef; and Celestine's half brother Russell Kashpaw, a shattered war hero. There is also Omar, a barnstorming stunt pilot, who, in the opening chapter, flies off with Adelaide, permitting her to abandon her three children on the fairgrounds below. This is the desperate, sad act that initiates the tangled actions of the book.

Several minor characters from the author's first novel, *Love Medicine*, pop up in *The Beet Queen*, and the setting is essentially the same as in that book—the flat, sparsely populated farm country where eastern North Dakota turns into western Minnesota, the literal and figurative border country where Chippewa tribal lands and lives grind against the land and lives of small-

Russell Banks's most recent books are Continental Drift *and* Success Stories *(Harper & Row).*

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time white farmers, who in turn are swallowed by agribusiness. Erdrich sets her fiction squarely in the tense zone where races, cultures, languages, technologies and classes clash and overlap. Like most good fiction writers, she lives year-round in border country.

The Beet Queen is the second of a projected quartet of books dealing with the same cluster of families and events. *Love Medicine*, widely praised for its energy, inventiveness and compassion, was focused more directly on the lives of the Indians, and might for that reason seem more explicitly political than its successor. Yet it's evident from *The Beet Queen* that Erdrich has quite as much compassion for the white inhabitants of the small town of Argus, North Dakota, and environs as for the Chippewas. Employing exquisite irony, she dramatizes the empty inner life of a small-town booster by letting him speak for himself:

> I'm Wallace Pfef. Chamber of commerce, Sugar Beet Promoters, Optimists, Knights of Columbus, park board, and other organizations too numerous to mention. In addition to supporting the B# Piano Club and managing the town swimming pool, I am the one who is bringing beets to the valley, beets that have yet to fail as a cash crop anywhere, beets that will make refined white sugar every bit as American as corn on the cob.
>
> There has been resistance to my proposition, and why not? Agronomists value cyclical regularities. They are suspicious of innovation, and my business is courting change. To woo them, I've become the friend to agricultural co-ops and visited each area farmer individually. I've drunk sloe gin and schnapps and nameless basement brews. In town I've joined up with a vengeance, for I know that within the fraternal order lies power. Eagles, Moose, Kiwanis, Elk. I need to belong. I've gained a hundred ears, pumped hands, exchanged secret passwords with my brothers. I've told them how beets are much more than a simple crop. They are the perfect marriage between nature and technology. Like crude oil, the beet needs refining, and that means Refinery. That spells local industry. Everyone benefits.

There is a Bruegel-like realism to *The* Beet Queen—crisply articulated details on the surface of figures and landscapes arranged as deliberately as a bowl of fruit—that affirms the presence of moral intent and suggests the immanence of moral truth. One attends to

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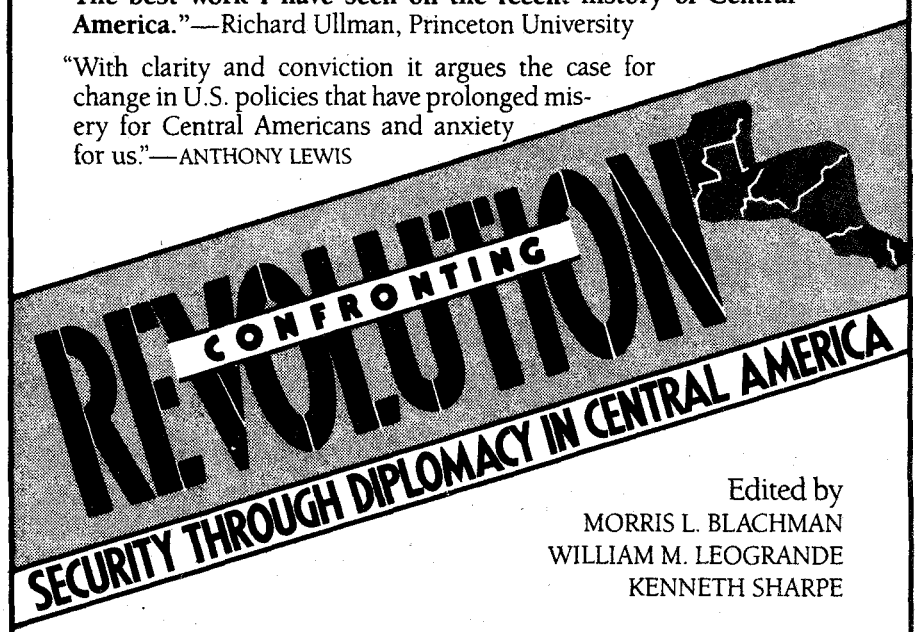

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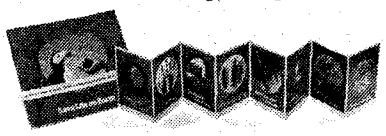

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Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernoff, eds.
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(Vol. I (1982), which focuses on the social sciences, history and philosophy, was published by McGraw-Hill.)

the story the way one attends to a Gothic fairy tale, full of sudden, unexpected turns and gory surprises. Indeed, there are a few too many allusions to fairy tales in the book, making one a little more conscious of the act of reading than one needs to be. This is not a self-reflexive tale and we ought not be distracted from the business at hand.

Briefly, the story begins when the respectable, married, bourgeois lover of the poor but beautiful, and pregnant, Adelaide Adare dies, abandoning her and their two children, Karl and Mary, to abject poverty (it's 1932, the worst of the Depression). Fleeing Argus for Minneapolis, where things only get worse, Adelaide takes her children to the fairgrounds one day and, as if on impulse, flies off with a barnstormer in his plane. Eleven-year-old Mary says, "Our longing buried us. We sank down on her bed and cried, wrapped in her quilt, clutching each other. When that was done, however, I acquired a brain of ice." It's her brain of ice that saves her and gets her back to Argus, where she is taken in by her aunt and uncle and gradually, after much suffering, makes a life for herself. Her brother Karl, a more fragile soul than she, ends up as a traveling salesman forever on the move. When he takes stock of his life he sounds like one of Sam Shepard's alienated Westerners:

> I sat there drinkless and coatless, my hat on, my keys dangling off a ring, until the sky turned orange and one by one the neon signs around the place flashed in bows and zippers. They were just moving figures. Nothing around me spoke. And as I sat there and the shadows gathered and the lizards scraped along the tiles, I made less and less sense, too, until I made none at all. I was part of the senseless landscape. A pulse, a strip, of light.
>
> I give nothing, take nothing, mean nothing, hold nothing.

Years pass quickly in this book. The chapters are alternately narrated by each of the main characters in a voice that belongs simultaneously to the character and to an impersonal, overseeing consciousness, so that the voices seem to blend, as in a chorus, without ever losing their remarkable individuality. Erdrich has been able to give each of her characters their own tone, diction, pitch and rhythm, without letting go of her own. The effect is to deprive the book of a single hero, one character against whom all the others are defined, and to

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replace it with something like a community. Although this was also true of *Love Medicine*, it is more successful in *The Beet Queen*, where the multiple voices are orchestrated more elegantly and the structure of the narrative is more rigorously formal. A number of recent books with similar ambitions come to mind—Carolyn Chute's *The Beans of Egypt, Maine*, Joan Chase's *During the Reign of the Queen of Persia*, John Edgar Wideman's *Damballah*, for instance. It's as if these authors have chosen to eschew, on principle, a single central consciousness—an individualized sympathetic norm that, like the reader's consciousness, has found itself set in the center of a world gone wacky—and have instead attempted to make a family or a village or tribe, that is, a people, into the protagonist. They seem to be struggling to discover, or perhaps rediscover, a narrative form equal to a social and political vision radically different from the one we inherited from the modernists. Such books are proposing profound changes in the way we read fiction and, as a consequence, in how we see the world. □

FILMS.

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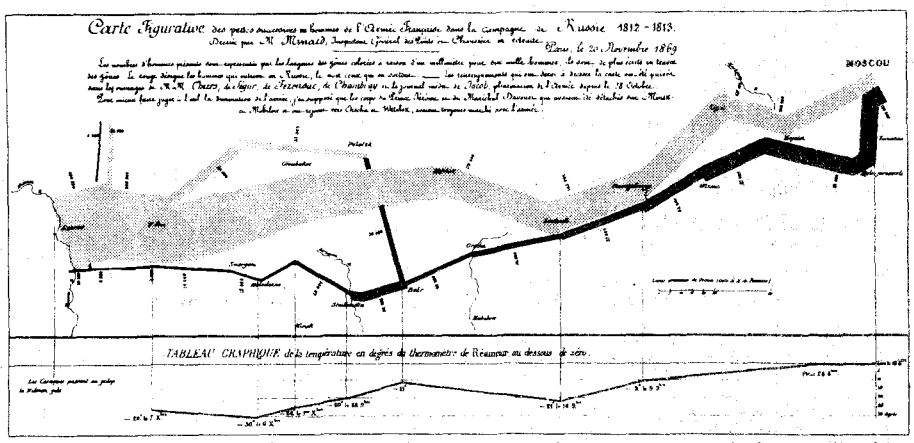
Sid and Nancy

For its first hour, before it spirals downward into the junkie tragedy of the Sex Pistols' Sid Vicious and the girlfriend he loved and (probably) killed, Alex Cox's *Sid and Nancy* is a rare kind of *Hard Day's Night* in hell—a rare try at capturing some real rock-and-roll madness on screen. Watching Vicious and Johnny Rotten (played by Gary Oldman and Drew Schofield), the stars of England's most notorious—and best—punk band, smash the windshield of a Rolls-Royce, brain members of the audience with their instruments, pitch darts at each other in a pub and throw up in elegant restaurants and hotel suites isn't *quite* the same as seeing the Fab Four, mop-tops bobbing, scamper cheerfully around London with squealing fans in pursuit, but still—different styles of hysteria for different times. In 1964 the Beatles' buoyant music, shaggy hair and cheeky, throwaway wit were liberating, a happy anarchy. By 1977,



This map, drawn by the French engineer Charles Joseph Minard in 1869, portrays the losses suffered by Napoleon's army in the Russian campaign of 1812. Beginning at the left on the Polish-Russian border near the Niemen, the thick band shows the size of the army (422,000 men) as it invaded Russia. The width of the band indicates the size of the army at each position. In September, the army reached Moscow with 100,000 men. The path of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in the bitterly cold winter is depicted by the dark lower band, which is tied to a temperature scale. The remains of the Grande Armée struggled out of Russia with only 10,000 men. Minard displayed *six* dimensions of data on the two-dimensional surface of the paper.

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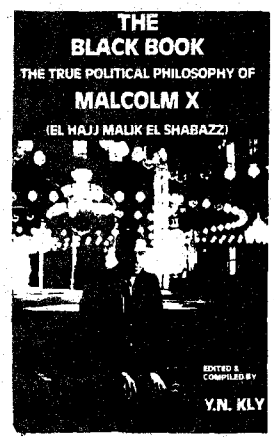

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when Sid Vicious joined the Sex Pistols as their bass guitarist (replacing Glen Matlock), something stronger was clearly required to get our attention. Johnny Rotten, ranting like an inspired subway crazy, kicked off "Anarchy in the U.K.," the group's first single, by announcing, "I am an Antichrist" against a musical background so fast and so shatteringly loud it sounded as if the band was playing in a suicidal rage, attacking themselves with their own instruments. If the Beatles' music seemed to go directly to some pleasure center in the brain, the Sex Pistols' was like a pure jolt to the central nervous system, and the effects weren't all that different. What both bands aimed for, and achieved, was maximum immediacy, the one quality common to all great rock-and-roll; the music wouldn't be so exhilarating if it cared about being timeless.

The trouble with most movies about rock is that film tends to memorialize its subjects. The Beatles movies, intended as quick, unfussy exploitations of a hot new act, are nostalgia items now, and the Beatles' performances are the occasions not of screaming ecstasy but of contemplation, through the filter of everything that has changed. We watch *A Hard Day's Night* knowing that this clear, open music would become, under the influence of psychedelics, more complex and inward; that bitter personal and financial differences would blow the band apart; that John would be shot dead in New York City. In D.A. Pennebaker's 1967 documentary of Bob Dylan, *Don't Look Back*, which has just been released on videocassette, the young Dylan's anger—even when it took the form of cruel, condescending wit—looks remarkably innocent and straightforward compared with his sour posturing in the late 1970s and the 1980s. Elvis, in his countless awful movies, looks pathetic and trapped to us now, because we know that he would never stop wasting his huge talent. One of the best rock movies, Michael Lindsay-Hogg's documentary *Let It Be*, which showed the Beatles bickering and sulking their way through one of their final recording sessions (and finally saying the hell with it and playing a loose, impromptu concert from the roof of their studio), was already a memorial on the day it was released, in 1970: by then the group had split for good. And the finest rock-and-roll film of all, Martin Scorsese's *The Last Waltz*, was actually designed as a commemoration—an elaborately staged farewell concert by the Band, who play ferociously and do look back. Playing as if there's no tomorrow, with the possibility that everything's going to fly apart, is crucial to rock-and-roll. At its most thrilling, it's a scary, tenuous, abandoned art. The threat of dissolution gives live rock its charge, but actual dissolution—which movies, by fixing the ephemeral sounds and images forever, inevitably remind us of—makes everything poignant, elegiac. It complicates the original, heedless excitement of the senses with something reflective and diffuse. Every art loses some vitality, and perhaps even some meaning, when it turns into history, and the most immediate have the most to lose.

The Sex Pistols, who lasted only long enough to make one album, have plenty to lose on film. No group was ever faster, rawer or more reckless, and they screamed "No future" as if they really meant it. The existing movies of the band don't even constitute a proper memorial. Lech Kowalski's documentary *D.O.A.* had a lot of footage from the group's chaotic U.S. tour, their last performances together, but both the images and the sound were pitifully amateurish (as was the filmmaker's attempt to explain the sociology of punk). A later film, Julian Temple's *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, was apparently meant as a satirical post-mortem on the group, but the movie has never been distributed in the United States. This absence of commemoration, of visual spurs to nostalgia, is oddly appropriate to what the Sex Pistols were all about. They were built not to last but to shock and stimulate and stir things up and then pass, like a hurricane or a furious three-minute song. So it's almost a folly to attempt a historical, dramatic reconstruction of their era, even for a devotee like Cox, whose 1984 science-fiction comedy *Repo Man* is about the closest that movies have come to true punk style. Yet *Sid and Nancy* succeeds, because Cox is very canny about what the form allows him to do and what it doesn't. Working with actors and a script (co-written with Abbe Wool), at nearly a decade's distance from the events, gives Cox a kind of freedom he wouldn't have had if he'd filmed the Sex Pistols' story as it was happening in 1977. He can't give us the band's original, electrifying performances (their music is re-created in the film by

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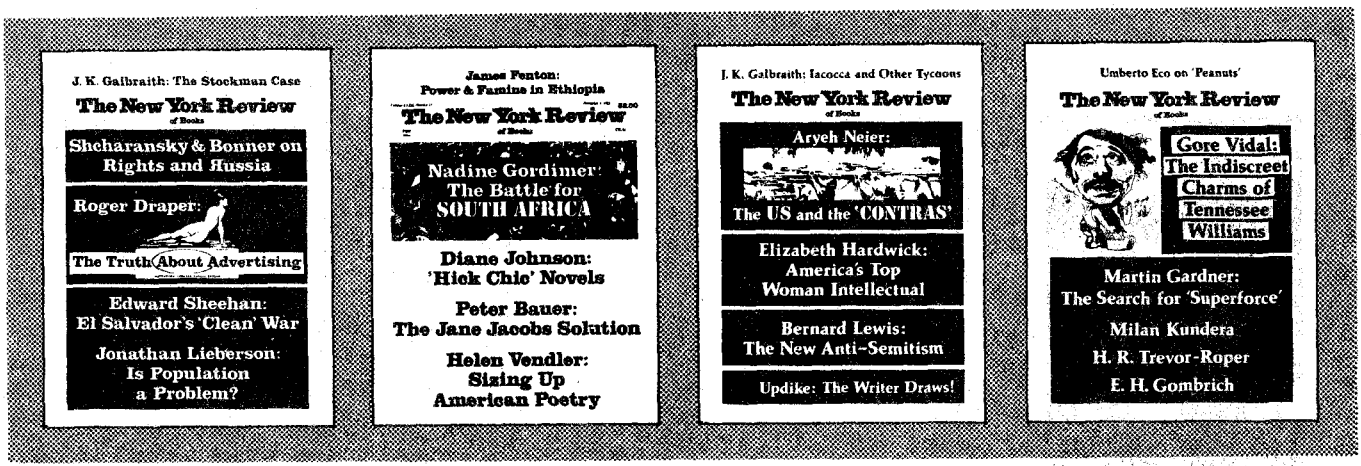
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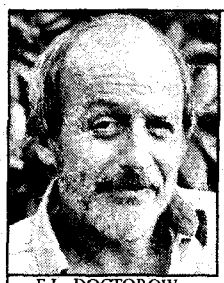
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Matlock, with Oldman and Schofield imitating Vicious and Rotten—passably—on the vocals), but the artifice also means that, if he's careful, he can avoid the death-mask pathos that has invaded rock documentaries over the years.

And Cox is extremely careful. His direction of *Sid and Nancy* is rather muted—it's a far less idiosyncratic movie than *Repo Man*, his aggressively weird take on L.A. car culture. Although the sound track of his first film featured some of the hardest-core West Coast bands (like the Circle Jerks), and the lead actor (Emilio Estevez) wore a single earring, it wasn't music or fashion that made the film so authentically punk. *Repo Man*'s punk quality came from its combination of dreary landscapes and hopped-up characters, its jagged, unpredictable editing rhythms and its distinctive mood of offhand nihilism. It was a movie in which everything was disposable—cars, jobs, lives—and it proceeded as if every few minutes the director were crumpling up his last set of ideas and throwing them away, and then picking up something new from all the junk out there on the street. Cox seems to have known, instinctively, that the nearest cinematic equivalent to the punk-rock aesthetic is B movies, which are trashy and assaultive, hilarious and scary, and not at all fussy about technique. (The Ramones, America's cheerful, mock-moronic counterpart to the Pistols, once recorded a song based on *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.) *Repo Man*, with its random shocks, its erratic bursts of obscene humor and the presence, in a key role, of scuz-movie icon Harry Dean Stanton, had the attitude that more ambitious punk movies lacked. Next to it, a picture like *Rude Boy*, Jack Hazan and David Mingay's semidocumentary about the very political punk band the Clash, looked all wrong. Cox's—and the Sex Pistols'—brand of punk has no ambitions, no revolutionary project: it's just a chainsaw with a deafening buzz, shredding stuff that isn't worth anything anyway.

Sid and Nancy is constructed of short, torn-off scenes, but it sticks to the point and it's economical. Sid, a weedy, dim-looking working-class kid, joins the Sex Pistols and meets Nancy Spungen (played by Chloe Webb), a brash, peroxided American groupie who turns him on to heroin. He gets famous, more for his attitude than for his talent—he can't play a lick, but he

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looks great, sneering and spitting at the audience and pounding spastically at his bass guitar as if he were just too *angry* to keep the beat. (In the film the group's manager, Malcolm McLaren, played by David Hayman, sees Sid as a kind of found art: "Sidney's more than a mere bass player. He's a fabulous disaster! He's a symbol! A metaphor! He embodies the dementia of a nihilistic generation.") The band breaks up at the end of its U.S. tour, and Sid and Nancy, still hooked on heroin and each other, move into a squalid little room in New York City's Chelsea Hotel, where art and self-destruction are enshrined together, where there's a genius barfing or nodding out in every room. Sid's just an image, not an artist; his attempt at a solo career (managed by Nancy) is a dismal flop, and all they have to do is drugs. In October 1978, barely a year after the Sex Pistols' breakup, Nancy is found dead in their room, apparently stabbed by Sid, perhaps in a suicide pact he failed to complete. In any event, he finishes himself off with an overdose a few months later.

Cox just lays it all out, simply enough to do justice to Sid and Nancy's painful story, but not so starkly that he flattens out or falsifies the energy of punk. As *Repo Man* showed, he's a director who understands recklessness, disposability, the euphoria of not giving a damn. He doesn't have to explain punk, because it's running in his veins. Cox's unforced sympathy for his subject enables him to bring off the very tricky evolution of the film's tone, from the spirited, rudely funny spectacle of the Sex Pistols thrashing about England and America in the final throes of their career, to Sid and Nancy's grim, intimate dissolution. He doesn't turn the doomed couple into metaphors—he keeps them specific, and certainly doesn't underestimate either Sid's stupidity or Nancy's psychotic self-destructiveness—but he makes their excruciating slide into oblivion seem continuous with the self-consuming nature of the Sex Pistols' music, an extension (and perversion) of punk's hell-bent aesthetic. Sid, pathetically, lives the brief remainder of his life after the band's breakup as a drugged, slow-witted parody of his public image. He looks as if he were playing back the short, intense history of his fame to his own sluggish rhythms, and the story of Sid and Nancy, in the second half of the film, is like the Sex Pistols' "Pretty Vacant" slowed from 45 rpm to a torpid 33⅓: The song lasts a little longer, but at that speed there's no point, and it ends anyway. Cox makes us see Sid's end as punk's cruel joke on a dumb kid, and the ironies cut the pathos. *Sid and Nancy* can't quite help being a kind of memorial to Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen and the Sex Pistols, who all flamed out fast, but it is, for once, an elegy in the spirit of its subjects: pitiless, sardonic and shockingly funny. In Cox's densely detailed compositions and Oldman and Webb's eerily empathetic performances there's a vitality that gives the lie to the dreamy pop-culture nostalgia of most rock movies. When the actors, improvising their climactic dance of death in the Chelsea Hotel, hurl each other back and forth across the room, wanting to end it and not wanting to, being themselves and acting something out, the camera following every unexpected move, it's as terrifying and ecstatic as anything the Sex Pistols ever did. Cox and his actors know when to turn their amps up all the way, and *Sid and Nancy*, without wanting to be a classic, lingers in the mind like a piercing blast of feedback. □

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POSTPONEMENT

The Olof Palme Memorial Lecture

Featuring Mr. Oliver Tambo and Mrs. Lisbet Palme

Scheduled for October 29 at the Riverside Church has been postponed, because of the Mozambican tragedy, to December 3, 7:30 PM.

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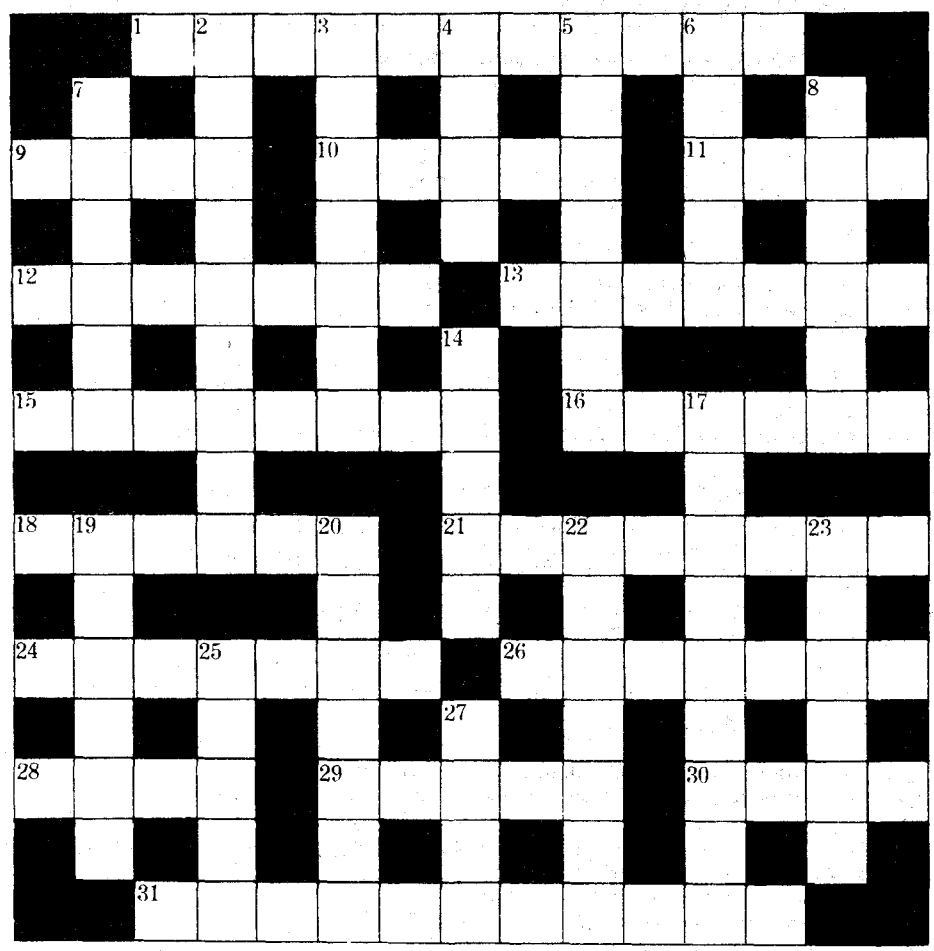
Crossword Puzzle No. 2123

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Place for a little corporal punishment? (If it ended like it started, it could have been a big blow-out!) (5,6)
9 and 30 Birds are smart—one who knows John Peel does! (8)
10 and 11 Not a press cutting, though it might hold one or two. (5,4)
12 What happens when you forget to apply rust preventative to the body. (Rabbits like them!) (7)
13 See 26
15 Made rice into this? That should take care of you when you are ill! (8)
16 Gets taken to court, perhaps—but came out all right. (6)
18 Thinks one sip is enough for it? (6)
21 The boss of Amtrak? That's as far as you can go! (8)
24 A singular thing one sees on television, if the fit should be regarded as perfect. (Living in oxygen, too.) (7)
26 and 13 Could one be accused of it after the horse escapes? (It might be on the map.) (5,2,7)
28 As to this, it's a point for the philosopher, perhaps. (4)
29 E.T. made a broken line. (5)
30 See 9
31 Coming from the C.I.A. mill, have expedient politics learned from him? (11)

DOWN

2 and 19 A musical instrument has a staple version associated with certain apparel. (9,6)
3 The sort that happen (pet taken out) might be cleaner, for some. (7)
4 Between faith and charity, with the cape of good finish like this. (4)
5 The body of knowledge connected with flowers which certain sailors found attractive. (7)
6 Spoons in a slightly later version—the strait and narrow types. (5)
7 Somewhere between Greece and Turkey, the car got wrecked! (6)
8 Run through something like the early President? (6)
14 Carries animals and those who are pessimistic about the future. (5)
17 One doesn't come up for air with this—or a variant of it. (9)
19 See 2
20 Chaps in trouble—usually green. (7)
22 Where grandmother might have had to put the wood can be easily reached, if this. (2,5)
23 Santa came down the chimney with one—but lots of things do! (6)
25 Those associated with it didn't land in Nebraska, however. (5)
27 Proving the singer always comes up greedy! (4)

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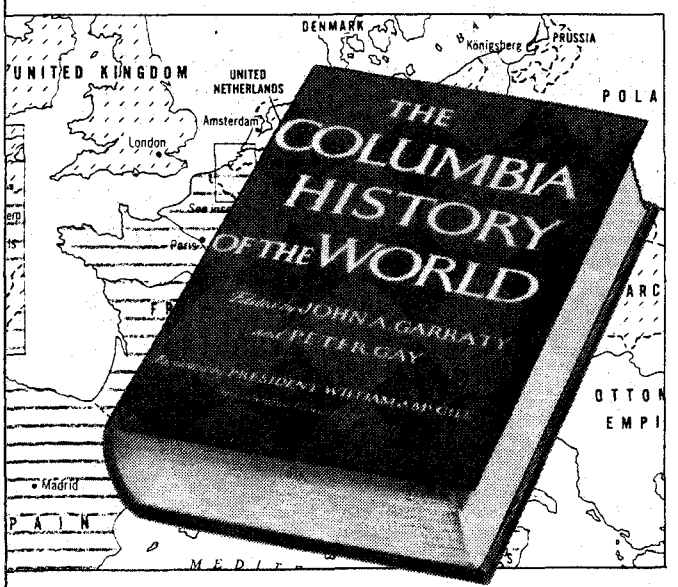

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